

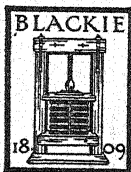
A KEY TO SPEECH AND SONG

BY

BARBARA STOREY

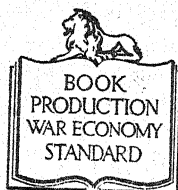
AND

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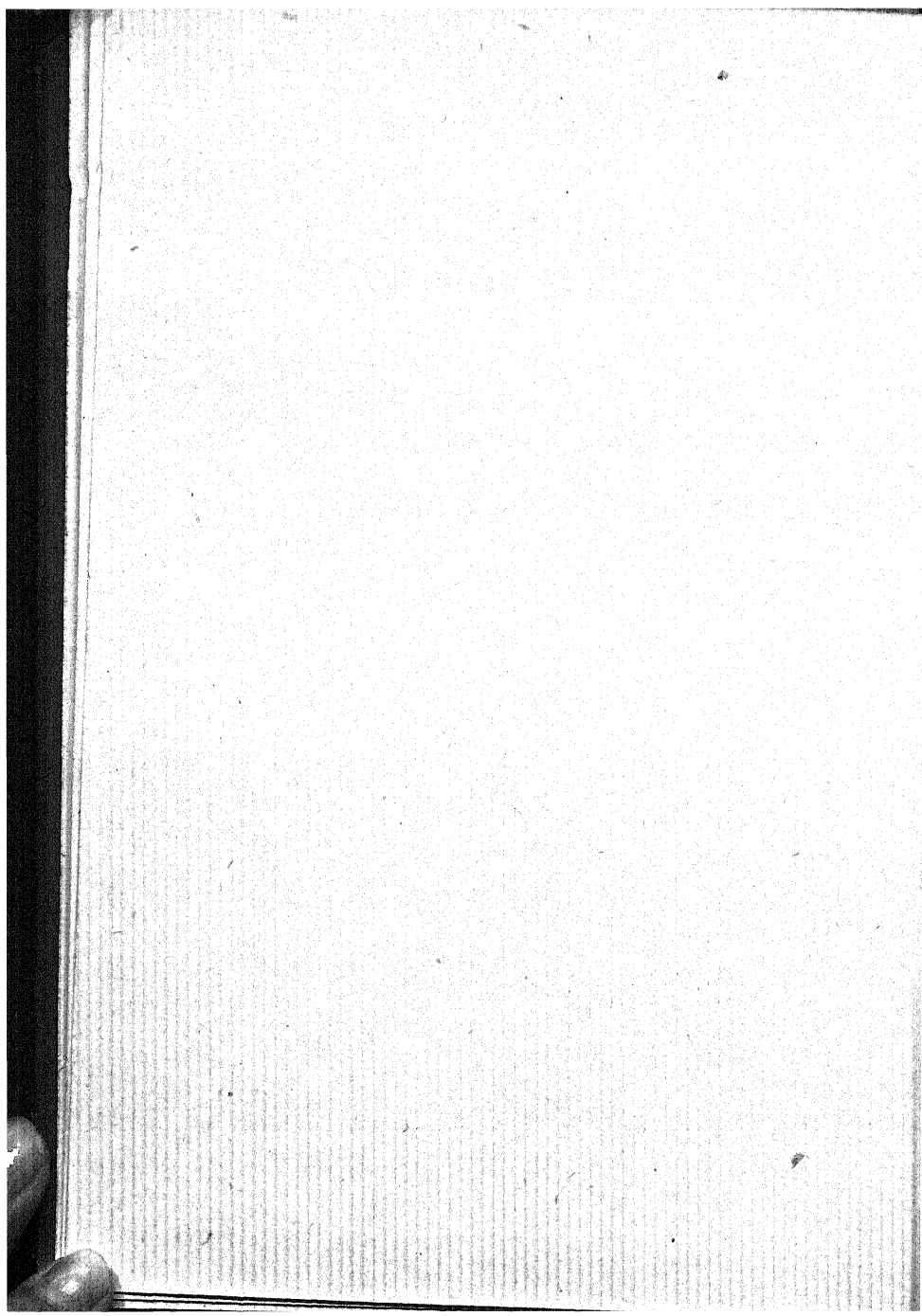
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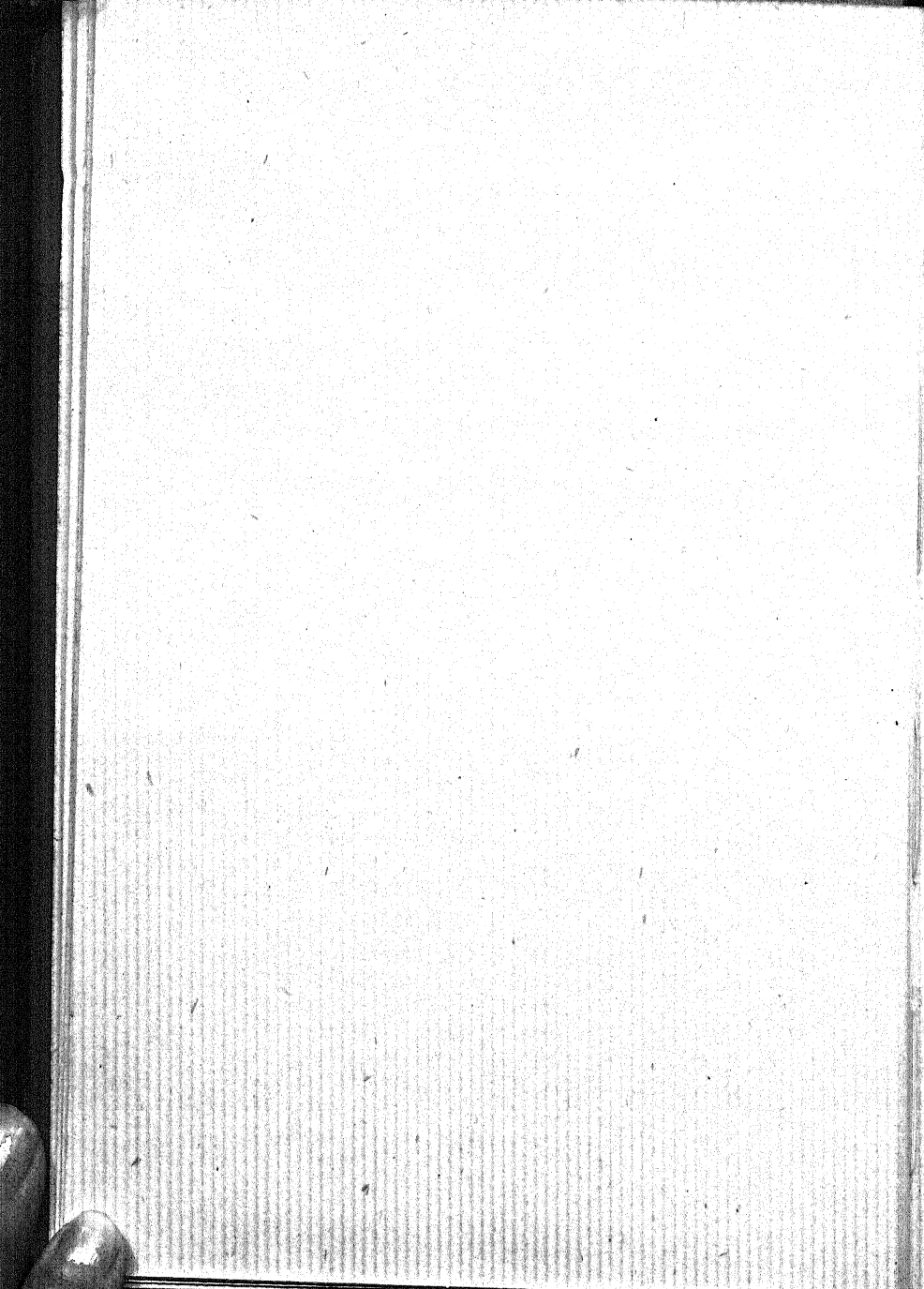
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BARBARA STOREY.

ELSIE BARNARD.



CHAPTER I

Introductory

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

FROM the beginning man has been interested in speech. From the legends of every country it is apparent that, in earlier days, the spoken word was regarded as having immense potency. St. John says "In the beginning was the Word". In the Old Testament story of Creation occurs over and over again the phrase "and God *said*". God talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Adam named the animals, thus establishing his ascendancy over them, and this belief in the vital importance of a name has persisted to the present day in our christening ceremonies, even though we have lost sight of its original significance in the familiar ceremony.

We tell the story of Rumpelstiltskin to our children without realizing that we are voicing the belief of our forefathers that in the utterance of the name lay the power to overcome.

It is a little difficult in these days of newspapers and books to realize the tremendous significance of speech in those long ages before the ingenuity of man set to work to record spoken sounds. Nor do we realize how many centuries went to the perfecting of the written language. The oral tradition has suffered eclipse, and is only now beginning to emerge from obscurity, largely through the instrumentality of the microphone, but also, let us hope, because the world is moving towards a new realization of the human

factors in life, and particularly of the part which speech must play in the human situation.

The partnership between speech and song is an ancient and honourable one. It has its roots in human nature, and has developed with the gradual development of man, for the human voice is the instrument used in producing both, and it is both the oldest and the only living instrument. In an age when mechanical invention lays claim to supremacy, making it possible for men to buy rather than make their own music, and to read words rather than to speak them, it becomes supremely important to reiterate the primary necessity of developing this human living music of speech and song. It is indeed so closely bound up with the activity of living that it is an integral part of man's individuality.

The beginnings of speech and song are lost in the past. By their nature they are ephemeral—disturbances of the air, dying away as soon as uttered, apparent only in their power to influence thought and action. Science has given to the twentieth century the power to record speech in permanent form. Future generations will be able to hear us talk, long after we are dust, but in the far away days when man first uttered his thoughts and feelings there was no possibility of a permanent record, and we are left to guess and to imagine what noises he made.

Scholars have built up for us a sequence of pictures of these early men and women, and can tell us that speech and song as we know them to-day have grown from very simple beginnings. Primitive speech consisted mainly of intonation and gesture with fewer articulated sounds than we use to-day.

This intonation we can observe in the howl used by the native tribes of Australia—survivals of the Stone Age—and by certain animals. The Australian howl is something like this:



with the notes less clearly defined than the semitones in the illustration. From hints such as these we realize how closely allied song and speech were then—an alliance which has persisted in the folk songs of all nations. The development of instrumental music and of written language, each along its own line, has led in recent times to a situation in which the musical setting of words and the words themselves often seem to be unwilling partners, yoked arbitrarily rather than by natural affinity. Indeed, with speech and music at their present stage of development, one wonders whether speech must always be subservient to music for, speaking generally, songs are usually remembered for their melodies, not necessarily for the words set to the melodies, and sometimes fine poetry set to music seems to suffer, at any rate in the opinion of those who are sensitive to words.

Nevertheless, there is a very close link between speech and song. In any healthy community both should have a prominent place, not from any desire for skilled recital, in the platform sense, on the part of individuals, but because to speak and sing, together and alone, is natural and necessary to social beings such as ourselves.

Both speech and song are essentially rhythmic. The rhythmic principle is all-important in the primitive forms of music and song still existing to-day. The drum-beats of the African tribes have a compelling, almost irresistible rhythm. Ritual songs and dances depend very largely on changing rhythms which evoke a response from the audience. Even sophisticated twentieth-century people like ourselves recognize this living force, and our "hot" music is the modern version of man's instinctive response to and recognition of rhythm.

Man differs from birds, animals and insects in the great variety of rhythmic patterns which he creates for the purpose of communication. Birds sing the

same song from generation to generation—lions roar, dogs bark, sheep bleat to-day as in the days of our forefathers, but man's speech develops with his developing powers, varies according to the uses to which he puts it, and is continually enriched as human experience deepens and extends.

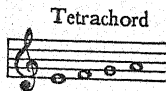
Because in these days we are in danger of ignoring the importance of oral tradition, it is worth while briefly to recall the early attempts to record speech and music. Picture-writing was the ancestor of modern script. How can we, nowadays, appreciate the intense preoccupation with language which gave birth to hieroglyphics? An understanding of writing was attributed to the Gods in the early legends of many peoples, and the written language was a gift from them to men. Here we have a clue to the respect always accorded to written records—a respect amounting to veneration—and to those leaders of the people who understood them and preserved them. It is a far cry from ancient Egypt to twentieth-century England, and yet only within comparatively recent times has the art of writing been made available to everyone. Once the jealously guarded prerogative of the few, it is now the everyday tool of the many. How much veneration is accorded it to-day? And how many, of all those countless thousands who use it, remember the amazing developments through which it has passed, or that it came into being, first of all, in order that evanescent spoken words might be recorded?

The early attempts to record music are a strong witness to the importance of oral utterance and its persistence almost up to our own times.

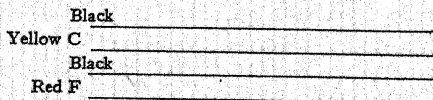
The Greeks, the Romans, and the ancient Celts of Ireland and Wales placed letters of the alphabet above words to indicate the pitch of the sung note.¹ Music

¹ Canon Galpin in *The Music of the Sumerians* says that a similar system was used by the Sumerians; instances a tablet of 800 B.C. on which is inscribed "a hymn on the creation of man".

was an integral part of the temple ritual of the Hebrews. Families of singers were attached to the Temple, who handed down the sacred melodies by word of mouth from generation to generation. It is probable that these melodies were confined to the compass of what is termed a *tetrachord*,¹ the limited range lending itself to the expression of the mysterious, the solemn and the lofty. The tetrachord is important because it was the basis of the mediæval tone-systems, and, in a modified form, of our own scales, diatonic and chromatic.



Following the use of letters of the alphabet came the "neume" notation, about the end of the fourth century A.D. Dots, dashes, and accent marks, placed over the words to be sung, showed the rise and fall of the melody. Naturally such a method lent itself to different readings of the same tune, since there was no indication of how far the melody rose and fell. As a record, used alongside the aural method, it was helpful, but without the sung melody it was quite obviously not only insufficient, but a danger to the purity of the melodies. This, naturally, was a matter of concern to the Church, and the first step towards improved recording was taken when someone whose name is unknown drew a red line above the Latin text and called it the F line. Some time later Guido d'Arrezzo (990-1050), realizing that spaces were as important as lines, added a top line in yellow and called it the C line. This idea he developed later on, by adding black lines, one below and one above the yellow line, thus:








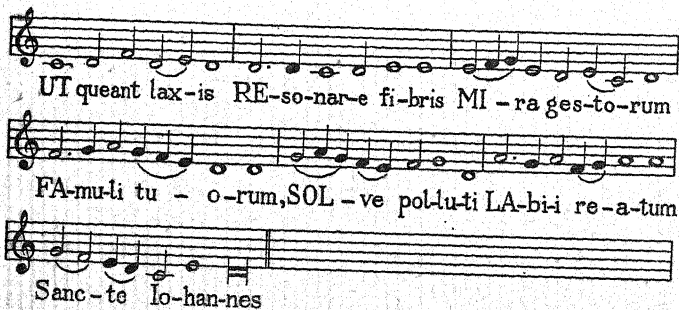
The neumes were used on these lines. Gradually the heads of the neumes were thickened, and the shapes

¹ Tetrachord—a word which simply means four strings.

became more regularized. By the end of the thirteenth century the neumes assumed the following shapes:

- Maxima—the greatest.
- Longa—long.
- Brevis—short.
- ◆ Semibrevis—half-short.
- ↓ Minima—least.

Later what is known as “white notation” was introduced. This notation kept to the same shapes of notes, but in outline only, thus leading to the idea of the later semibreve and minim as we now know them,  and . As rhythmic patterns became more complicated notes of smaller value were necessary. Thus, the half-minim or crotchet , the croma or quaver , and the semicroma or semiquaver , made their appearance. To Guido d'Arrezzo we owe the sol-fa system of



teaching singing. No one, yet, had thought of the possibility of recording fixed pitch, and thus setting down the actual notes to be sung. Learning by ear fixed tonic relationships, and it was these relationships that the first recordings attempted to define. D'Arrezzo

substituted a hexachord for the original tetrachord, and named its notes ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la. These syllables he took from the words of a Latin hymn, written about A.D. 770, because it so happened that each half line began on an ascending degree of the hexachord.

It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that a seventh syllable (si) was added because the heptachord was superseding the hexachord. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the syllable "doh" replaced "ut", and it was soon adopted in almost every country of Europe except France. There are several reasons given for the change of syllable—that it was adopted from the name Doni, who was a theorist of Italy; that it was the first syllable of the word Dominus; or that it was certainly a more resonant syllable to sing.

The employment of the bar (a vertical line drawn across the stave) does not appear until the beginning of the sixteenth century, and its object seems to have been in the first place to facilitate the reading of compositions written on score, by keeping the different parts properly under each other, rather than to mark the rhythmic divisions. Henry Lawes appears to have been the first English musician who regularly employed bars in his compositions. His *Ayres and Dialogues*, published in 1653, are barred throughout.

The science of acoustics has made it possible to fix the pitch of middle C, and it is now recognized the world over even though Continental pitch is still a semitone above the classical pitch. We are no longer dependent entirely on a good ear for the preservation of the original purity of melody and harmony.

Perhaps this may be regarded as yet another reason for our loss of interest in hearing and our dependence on other agents to reinforce the work which should be done by our ears. Whatever the cause, there can be little doubt that the invention and development of the art of printing has played an important part in checking the creative communal use of the spoken word.

Other factors, of course, share this responsibility, but behind them all lies the power of the machine. It gives us with one hand books, printed scores, films, means of transport, and a thousand other aids to entertainment, and, with the other, robs us of that creative impulse which is the very breath of life.

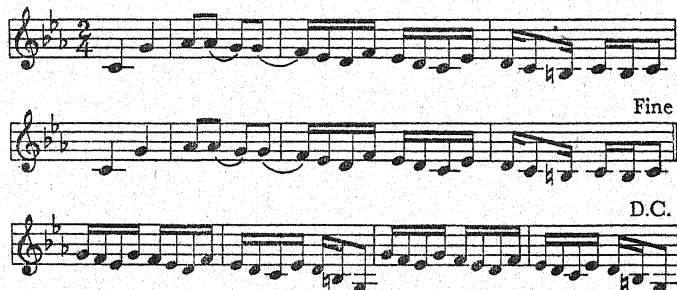
To revive this creative impulse in the community is a prime necessity. Equally important is it, that it should be revived in terms of our own age and generation—not in those of a vanished age. The village green, the baronial hall—these were part of an age which has passed, an age of small communities cut off from one another, and far more dependent on themselves and their own activities than is the case to-day. We cannot hope to transplant their patterns into our twentieth-century world, but we can study them to find the underlying principles from which they evolved. Principles transcend the limitations of time and generation.

Words, song and dance grew up together in the oral tradition. It is a matter of controversy whether the words and tunes of folk songs were first made by an individual or by the community—but since it seems impossible that spontaneous utterances by a group can be identical, it is more likely that an individual created a folk song, and that the community adopted it, varying it according to their liking.

This freedom to adapt the original form accounts for the variations of the same ballad which are found in different parts of the country. The ancient lineage of our nursery rhymes is shown by their appearance in many countries, each version differing slightly from the rest but bearing the sign of a common parentage. The outline of the tune of our own *Baa Baa, Black Sheep* is used in France (*Quand Trois Poules*), in Czechoslovakia (*Nás Kohoutek*), in Hebrew, Polish, Tyrolean, and German folk songs, and in gipsy dances. Side by side with this variation, folk-song collectors have

noted the exactness with which the same tune has been remembered by people living in quite different localities. In this connexion it is interesting to note that recent visitors to the Alleghany mountains in the United States of America have heard the old English ballads and folk songs still being sung. They crossed the seas with the Pilgrim Fathers, and still retain their old form, though the generation singing them now has never had any connexion with England. Memory is more

Gipsy Dance



It is interesting to note the minor Key, and the varied form of the tune.

retentive and trustworthy when there has been little opportunity for what is commonly known as culture.

An interesting article ¹ which appeared in the *English Folk Dance and Song Journal*, Vol. III, No. 2, mentions the famous fifteenth-century Dancing Book *Sur l'Art et Instruction de bien danser*, an original copy of which is owned by the Royal College of Physicians. The authorship of the book is uncertain, but it is known that it was printed in Paris by the printer Toulouse. These dances became very popular, and authorities on this subject wonder whether it was from this collection ²

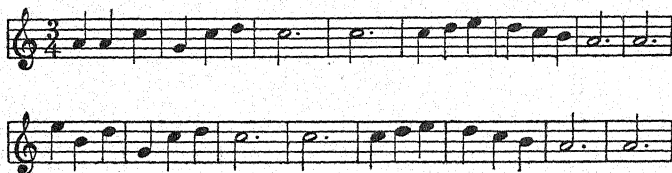
¹ By Margaret Dean Smith.

² Brought to England perhaps by Marguerite d'Autriche, a dancer and patron, who touched Southampton on her way to Spain.
(F 776)

or from some other source that a score of dances found their way to the fly-leaves of the Catholicon in Salisbury Cathedral Library, disguised but recognizable. Amongst the dances is the one "Filles à marier", which is something like its song in Varrimiste's *Rondes et Chansons*. This copy of the Catholicon was printed in Venice in 1497, during which time good paper was rare and costly, and the liberal blank pages at either end were used for all manner of notes by successive owners. The dances appear to be in a hand fairly contemporary

Filles à Marier

Sur l'art de bien danser.



with the book itself, but they are "crossed" like a Victorian letter with other coarser writing and may be completely decipherable only with the help of ultra-violet light.

To the singer the words of a folk song were more important than the tune. In fact, the tunes of the olden songs were little more than speech tunes. The words recalled the tune, as the dance reminded the fiddler of the music. Thus speech, song and dance were interwoven. They were made and sung and danced by the people. Audiences, as we understand them to-day, hardly existed. Everyone spoke, everyone listened. Singer, speaker and audience were members of a group, linked by bonds of understanding and communal experience.

Here is the first essential principle in any real revival of the sung and spoken word. We must not necessarily

aim at platform performance, except in certain instances, and we must ourselves sing and speak in order to understand what enrichment these activities really bring to us as individuals and as members of a group. We must make our own songs out of the rich material of our daily lives, and we should also be making our own dances instead of importing them.

The immense popularity of the "Lambeth Walk" and the "Palais Glide" has shown that it need not be quite so far a cry from the village green to the modern ballroom as many of us supposed.

The entertainer nowadays is in the grip of commercialism, and it seems as though nothing but the development of spontaneous group activity can change this state of affairs. For it was precisely such spontaneous group activity which vitalized communal expression in those early days of folk music.

No doubt the travelling minstrels and ballad-mongers earned their keep—they sang for their suppers; but the common people were their active partners, and by their own contribution kept the relationship between the individual performer and the audience well balanced. It is the fashion to-day to scoff at the amateur drawing-room performances of our parents and grandparents. Nevertheless, there is a good deal to be said for making one's own music and using one's own voice, instead of filling the role of listener always. Faculties unused tend to atrophy. It is easy to slip into the habit of paying to be entertained. Once this habit is established on a large scale, the commercial spirit creeps in, and then only the paying proposition in entertainment is readily available. That this is unfortunate no one will deny. The remedy seems to lie in a revival of creative communal activities which will restore the old balance between performers and audience. When this comes about we shall lose the absurd feeling that because we are not greatly talented therefore we must not open our mouths. Only a generation used to paying for a

seat in the audience can hold so mistaken a view. We should sing and dance and speak together because we both need and want to. Whether we do it well or ill is of secondary importance. It would seem, judging from the past, that in the course of time we might create music and words that would live in the hearts of future generations, as those of our forefathers live in ours.

It is scarcely likely that any sudden wave of communal song and speech will sweep over the country, achieving at once all that is necessary in the breaking down of habits of thought and practice. Nevertheless, there are many ways which lead towards the goal of creative effort in speech and song; for instance, the Church offers unique opportunities for individual and congregational speaking and singing.

Again, on the Stage recently we have seen the Chorus reintroduced, giving to speakers an experience comparable to that of singers in Choirs.

Festivals, up and down the country, draw together singers and speakers in large numbers. Choral Societies and the like cater for singers, Repertory Companies and Amateur Dramatic Societies for speakers. Broadcasting fills the ether every moment of the day and night, and is an ever-present reminder of the importance of spoken sounds. Nor should all the committee meetings held throughout the country be omitted—nor individual talks from platforms of every kind. Words by the million are uttered every day. There is no limit to the potency of the spoken word. "Life and death are in the power of the tongue", says the Book of Proverbs.

Many words which should be uttered are withheld because men and women, gaining so much from mechanical invention, are losing their power over creative speech. And how many who have to use the spoken word from some platform or other, really enjoy it? And how many are able to satisfy listening ears in the manner of their speech? And how many listener-

critics of speakers have the right to criticize—the right won by those who have attempted to do the thing they criticize?

How many of us have bothered about our own voices and our own manner of speech, as we go about our daily task, or have realized that in this natural gift of voice and speech we have the key to a world of vital interest? We need not fear to use the key because we are not greatly gifted, for it is one of the few human keys which all possess.

CHAPTER II

The Use and Care of the Voice

"Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing."—WILLIAM BYRD.

The Personal Aspect of Voice.

IT is, on the face of it, rather extraordinary that such a natural, human gift as the voice can be, and is, so often misused. Few people use their voices rightly without some specific training.

Yet since all natural endowments are closely interwoven with individual temperament, what we are temperamentally influences the use we make of our voice and movements. Consequently, such personal difficulties as nervousness, shyness, irritability, conceit, and so forth, interfere with the free use of our natural attributes. Everyone who has undergone some sensible training for the development of voice or of physical movement will admit that such training has had an effect on temperament. Equally true is it that psychological help in overcoming personal difficulties increases vocal and bodily freedom. Ideally, we should be harmonious beings—but we have not yet reached our goal. It is still necessary for us to strive after inner harmony and a balanced personality, and one course of action that we can take is to develop vocal freedom through speech and song. The fact that voice is a natural gift and that speech is a creative activity strengthens this contention. Where there is no physical disability, the vocal instrument is capable of producing sound of excellent quality, and we should realize that a poor

voice is not a natural endowment. Unfortunately, we tend to suppose that all voices are poor naturally, and can only become good after years of specialized training. This relieves us of any feeling of responsibility for our own voices, and we continue to misuse them to the pain of those who listen to us, and to our own great loss. Sometimes it happens that we feel we have excellent voices—we can make ourselves heard, and we can talk fluently under any circumstances—and yet our listeners, were they asked, could tell us that our voices are unpleasant to the ear, over-loud, inflexible, possibly very monotonous, or full of strange inflections.

The beginning of conscious vocal development lies in observant listening—listening to other voices, listening to our own. Speaking and listening go hand in hand. One is incomplete without the other. In this connexion, it is interesting to realize that our first attempts to talk are the result largely of imitation, and of the realization that certain noises bring certain responses from those who hear them. In those early days the link between mouth and ear is clearly shown. We tend to lose sight of this later on—helped by our gradual loss of interest in speech as the written word claims our attention and demands so much of our time. Environment, too, plays its part in determining our sensitivity to vocal sounds. Children who grow up in homes where there is a real love of music, and where speech is well used, naturally acquire a sensitivity to sound denied to those whose start in life is less fortunate. Real tone-deafness is rare—inability to appreciate differences in vocal pitch and quality will usually yield to patient and sympathetic training. Probably we all need help in developing our sense of hearing, as no very great attention is usually paid to this faculty unless it is obviously defective. A pleasant voice and an unobtrusive style of speaking are great personal assets. It is well worth while to make the necessary effort to acquire them.

The Social Aspect of Voice.

Because we are all members of a community we have some responsibility towards it; in fact, individual and social well-being are just two aspects of the same thing, and can scarcely be separated one from the other. We recognize this truth in many of its bearings, but are slow to realize that speech is an important factor in the relationship of the individual to the society of which he is a part.

Yet more and more is it being brought home to us that the spoken word is of immense importance to our civilization. We hear much of "personal contacts" and their value in dissolving conflicting points of view. In the business world as well as in the political sphere, round table conferences are approved as the best means of settling disputes. The international exchange of visits between representative groups of people supports this prevalent belief in the value of speech as an agent of real understanding. Broadcasting in many languages is yet another sign of the social value of the spoken word. Also the power of community singing to unite a crowd has long been recognized, whether the songs be well-known hymns or popular topical ballads, or our inherited folk songs.

With the weight of evidence so strongly in favour of the sung and spoken word, it is well worth while to expend some effort in developing so potent a force in social well-being. To sing and speak freely together is better than being tongue-tied, but better still is it to sing and speak as well as we possibly can. The finer the means of expression, the greater the gain both to the individual and to society.

There must be wonderful talent buried for lack of encouragement and opportunity. There must be a wealth of goodwill and desire for service imprisoned for lack of freedom in expressing it. To release these pent-

up forces is something to which everyone can turn his hand. As with charity, speech development should begin at home.

Some Essential Principles in the Use of the Voice.

The vocal instrument is a wind instrument. In order to use it properly we are bound to consider how we should breathe.

It is obvious that unless the instrument is supplied with the requisite amount of breath, it cannot produce the right kind of sound.

Also, unless this necessary amount of breath is blown steadily through the instrument, the sound produced will be uneven in volume and quality. Thus the first essential is to examine our breathing processes and discover a means of controlling them for the purpose of using the vocal instrument.

In normal breathing air is drawn into the lungs through the nose, and expelled by the same route. The soft palate is lowered into the mouth, to free the passage from nose to throat. Sufficient air is drawn in at each inhalation to meet the physical needs of the body. The rhythm of normal breathing is even, inhalation balancing exhalation. The lungs are not emptied with every breath expelled, but act as a reservoir, retaining a certain amount of air while the remainder flows in or out.

Breathing is an automatic business. We can control it, alter its rhythm, increase or decrease the amount of air drawn in, defer exhalation, but normally, we do not exercise our power of control consciously. The process is carried out by the automatic action of the muscles of the ribs and diaphragm.

The lungs are elastic, and are more or less pear-shaped, with their broadest end in the lower chest, where the cessation of the breast-bone gives the ribs greater freedom of movement.

The diaphragm is a very strong muscle, attached to the ribs and abdominal muscles, dividing the thorax (chest) from the abdomen. It is normally convex, but with the expansion of the ribs it flattens. Thus the chest cavity, on inhalation, is expanded in all three dimensions, side to side, top to bottom, back to front. The natural elasticity of all muscles makes it possible to develop this chest expansion considerably, when any special physical activity calls for a greater supply of breath. Deep breathing, as an exercise, has two great values. It renews the air stored by the lungs, and it develops muscular elasticity. It is not necessarily an end in itself, but a means to an end.

The production of vocal sound, and its consequent modification into speech sounds, is an extra physical activity, requiring a greater supply of breath than is normally necessary. This must be recognized by all who wish to develop voice.

One of the major causes of a poor voice is not a faulty instrument but lack of sufficient breath force. The first step towards improving such a voice is to experiment, consciously, with the breathing apparatus to find out what can be done with it.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Breathe in deeply, filling the lungs at their base. The fingers, placed lightly on the lower ribs, below the end of the breast-bone, will feel the expansion as the lungs fill with air, and the ribs and diaphragm adjust to accommodate them. It is important that the upper chest and shoulders should not be stiffened in any way. In fact there should be no upward movement of the shoulders; if there is, then the lower ribs are not expanding properly. Upper chest breathing is not helpful where voice is concerned. Release the breath slowly, feeling the collapse of the chest walls as the lungs empty.

Breathing is a natural, easy process; deep breathing is just an extension of normal breathing. There is no

need for any muscular stiffness or rigidity. If it appears when breathing exercises are being done, then there is a muddle somewhere in the mind and some totally unnecessary nervous tension. Relax, and begin again, thinking clearly about the ingoing breath and broad, elastic base of lungs.

2. If there is still difficulty, sigh with pleasure! This suggestion may remove the tension.

3. Never practise breathing exercises for too long at a time. If a dizzy feeling appears, it is probably due to some temporary alteration of the chemical balance of the body due to the extra breath taken in and not expended in physical activity. With a development in the use and control of breath, this feeling will disappear.

4. Practise swift inhalation and slow exhalation. For speaking and singing, the intake of breath needs to be instantaneous—far swifter than is necessary in normal breathing. Consequently we inhale *through mouth and nose*.

To realize the action of the diaphragm, take short quick breaths with the mouth open. Gradually make them slower and steadier, thus controlling the inhalation and exhalation of breath.

It is as well, at first, to stand in front of a mirror so that the eye sees any sudden shoulder movement, when air is inhaled swiftly. A useful test is to breathe in on 1, out on 2, 3, 4, 5, repeating this several times without a pause. The counting can extend to any suitable length. Always be ready to breathe in on 1.

The hardest to manage easily is a repeated count of 1, 2, 3. The intakes follow each other so swiftly. This exercise encourages flexibility in the rib muscles, and gives conscious control over the output of breath, but is an exercise for speakers and not for singers.

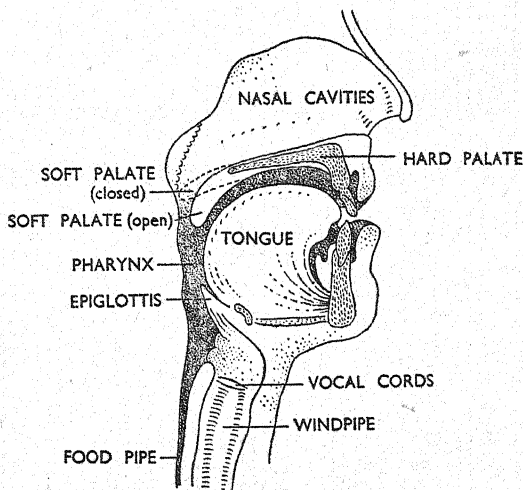
Once the lower ribs are expanding easily and freely, it is possible to consider the strength and steadiness with which the breath is expelled. When the lungs

collapse, the ribs collapse too, and the diaphragm returns to its normal convex position. Unless we exert some control over the muscles concerned this collapse will be fairly swift. We can, however, drive the breath out of the lungs quite slowly if we wish to do so. It is possible to blow steadily for quite a long time, or to use the breath for one swift strong blow. Anyone who has played "Blow Football" or any similar game will be aware of this fact. For speech and singing it is necessary that the breath should last for the length of the phrase, whatever that may be. If we are speaking verse or prose, or singing, the length of phrase is already determined for us. To know this length gives a sense of purpose to the expelling of breath, and we can use this sense of purpose consciously, just as easily as we use it unconsciously in blowing games. The only difficulty lies in bringing the unconscious process to the level of consciousness. At first there is a sense of difficulty in sustaining the breath, but this is largely a mental, not a physical difficulty, and is soon overcome with intelligent practice.

The steadiness of the stream of outgoing breath depends ultimately upon this clear sense of purpose in breathing, but weak rib muscles may be said to affect it directly. Obviously if the ribs collapse jerkily, the breath will leave the lungs in gusts, and the vocal cords at the top of the wind-pipe will not be able to vibrate steadily.

Here, again, energy is the starting-point—energy and a sense of purpose. Not energy visible in knotted muscles and a rigid body, but a flow of nerve energy which stimulates the necessary muscles and vitalizes the body. It is just at this point that temperamental difficulties assert themselves and affect voices. Nervousness is due to fear and fear has a paralysing effect. To concentrate on something as concrete as breathing, realizing it to be vital, stimulating and important, is to take the first step in control of nervousness,

Another important point in breathing for voice is direction of the breath. It seems odd that since the breath must pass out by way of the mouth in speech, any conscious direction of it is necessary. That it is so is due to the way in which the human instrument is constructed with some of the most important resonators placed a long way from the reed. Here is a diagram



Section of Mouth, Throat, etc.

which helps to make this point clear. The resonators, which amplify the fundamental note set up in the larynx, are the pharynx, the mouth, and the nasal cavities.

The larynx opens into the pharynx and the pharynx into the mouth cavity—but the back of the tongue and the soft palate partially block the way into the mouth. It is easy for the vibrating breath to collect in the pharynx, losing much of the vocal sound on the soft tissues there, and to trickle through into the mouth, without much power behind it. The nasal cavities and

the mouth connect via the bone of the hard palate,¹ which readily transmits the sound waves if they reach it. These nasal cavities are very important resonators and must be fully used if the voice is to be satisfactory. Since they are built of bone with only a thin membranous lining, they give a clear, bright quality to vocal sound. Because of their differing shapes, they reinforce various parts of the vocal compass. In addition, the full use of these resonators relieves the throat of any strain. Thus a clear sense of breath direction is necessary to avoid lodging the breath in the pharynx and losing the use of the nasal resonators. It will be obvious that a strong breath stream is necessary in order to fill the mouth cavity and bring the hard palate into play. Consequently the three major factors in good breathing are interdependent—adequate supply, a strong, steady expulsion of breath, and the direction of it on to the hard palate.

The throat must never be constricted—for this impedes the free flow of breath and hinders the action of the vocal cords.

Suggestions for testing vocal compass and freedom:

1. Press the lips lightly together and blow strongly through them so that they vibrate.

Repeat, using voice.

This is the noise that babies make so often.

Repeat, using as much vocal range as possible.

Notice (a) the strength of the breath stream; (b) the clear quality of vocal sound produced.

Many people whose normal voice is weak and breathy produce excellent tone when using this exercise, because, in order to perform it, they are bound to carry out the three important rules—plenty of breath, energy of expulsion, and direction of the breath stream forward to the lips. The whole vocal instrument is being used and, consequently, adequate vocal sound is produced.

¹ The passage from the nose via the soft palate to the pharynx is open for three speech sounds only—"m", "n" and "ng".

2. Hum easily on the sound "m", keeping the back of the tongue flat. The inner surface of the closed lips should feel the vibrating breath which fills the mouth cavity.

Start on as high a note as is easily possible and slide down to as low a note as possible. Do not sing a scale, but slur down. Aim at smoothness and an even pace throughout the range used.

Gradually extend the range.

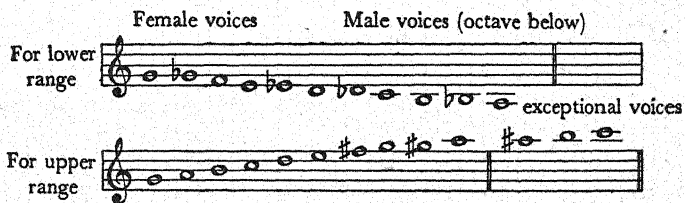
Repeat, beginning on a low note and sliding up.

Repeat, using the sound "oo".¹

Any break in the slide suggests that this part of the vocal range is seldom used normally, and needs development to make it useable.

The speaking voice has a range of at least two and a half octaves, and though the upper and lower limits are reserved for very emphatic utterance, yet they should be under conscious control and available for use without strain.

To test compass of singing voice start from medium note of voice, e.g. G—and sing to vowel "oo" or to ô as in not.



Gradually extend the compass—but avoid any tension in the throat and upper chest.

A few minutes a day spent on these exercises will have a beneficial effect on any voice.

They are simple and their purpose can easily be under-

¹ Singers should avoid the slide and use single notes—or scales and arpeggios.

stood. Perhaps their greatest value lies in the flexible control over voice which they help to establish. Both for speakers and singers easy production is essential. No listener should ever be aware of effort or strain in the performer. Too often, particularly in large halls, it seems hard work for the speakers and singers to produce sound. Also, where any strain is present, loudness and inflexibility characterize the voice.

Such exercises as those suggested prove, when intelligently performed, that volume and energy are two different vocal agents. Energy is an essential attribute in the production of sound, underlying and permeating the complete process. It supplies the carrying power of voice by strengthening and controlling the outgoing stream of breath. Volume assists in the communication of meaning. It is quality of tone which carries, not amount of tone, and quality depends largely on correct use of the instrument, and thus ultimately on the release of energy.

Resonance and Tone.

It is worth while clearing up the confusion which so often exists between these two terms.

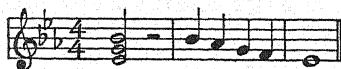
Resonance is the quality of sound produced by an instrument which is properly used. Scientifically speaking, a resonator is an object so designed as to respond to a specific note. Examples of this are not hard to find. Vases in a room will ring when certain notes are played on the piano; singers have shattered delicate glasses by singing into them the note to which they are attuned.

If the reed of any wind instrument is removed, and then blown, it is only a squeaker; placed within the specially constructed resonator, it produces a variety of resonant sounds. Similarly, the sounds produced by the vocal cords need the help of all resonators. The human voice has many resonators, all differing in shape, each supplying overtones for particular ranges

of the vocal compass. When all are fully used, resonant sound is heard. Thus resonance belongs to the physical side of voice production.

Tone may be said to begin where resonance ends. It is the sensitive use of resonance as a means of expression. Tone can vary in volume and in colour, if this term may be used. These variations arise from the emotional content of words spoken or sung. A sensitive use of tone is not possible until resonance has been established.

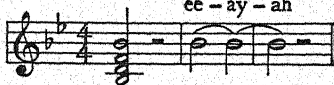
Tone Production and other Exercises for Singers.



Breathe ee —————

1. Ee has the brightest and most forward resonance of all long vowels and is, therefore, an important one to study. It is easy to control but often tends to be hard and unsympathetic. If the breath is held calmly with a feeling of full chest expansion, and there is no tension in face or jaw, there should be purity of tone and warmth and beauty of sound. Humming the exercise, and prefixing M or Y to the ee vowel will help to ensure forward tone. By listening, the singer must decide whether the result is satisfactory to the ear.

2. Sing with steady and calm tone the vowels: ee —ay—ah—oo—oh—aw. Oo and oh give fuller tone. Prefix "w" for a more forward delivery.



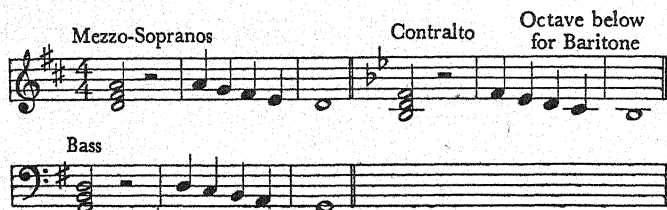
Breathe ee —————
ay —————
ah —————
oo —————

Then merge evenly one vowel sound into another as shown above the ex-

ercise. Should one be poor in quality place the better one first and last. Thus, if ay lacks forward production sing ee—ay—ee.

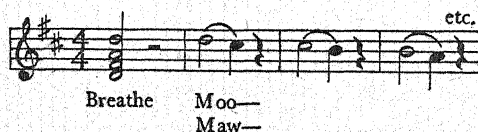
These exercises are suitable in pitch for Soprano, or for Tenor if played an octave below. Gradually extend range, aiming for equality of tone, but concentrate especially on the medium compass of the voice. Pitch for other voices see below.

The following exercises are written in pitch suitable



for mezzo-soprano and may be transposed for the compass of other voices.

3. Evenness of tone throughout descending scale. Aw is a very sonorous vowel. Do not let it be slack—something between ah and aw!



4. Sing slow scales descending first, and then ascending, four sounds to a breath. Use all the vowel sounds previously mentioned.



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5. For gaining equality of voice throughout compass.

a

oo-oh-ah
aw-ay-ce (or one vowel sound) etc.

b

oo-oh-ah-ay -ee (or one vowel sound) etc.

c

oo
ee
ah for high range

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

k Melodic Minor

l Harmonic Minor

Listen to good singing to develop sensitivity in the ear. It is necessary to realize the difference between good and poor vocal production, in order to listen with discrimination to the sounds one produces oneself—and, also, to have a mental image of what one wishes to produce.¹

Singing is an extended use of voice. Singers require even more breath than speakers do, for the musical phrase is frequently longer than the spoken phrase, and the sustained quality of the singing tone demands a larger supply of breath. Yet, in principle, both singing and speaking are governed by the same rules. Such differences as exist are differences in detail and occur more in the field of articulation and pronunciation than in the actual production of vocal sound.

Articulation and Pronunciation in Speech.

Vocal sound is modified into speech sounds by the action of the movable speech organs. These movable speech organs are (a) lips, (b) tongue, (c) soft palate, (d) lower jaw. By the movement of one or more of these organs, the shape of the mouth cavity is adjusted, with a consequent modification in the stream of vocal sound flowing through it.

The basis of good articulation is a real understanding of these articulating movements. Such an understanding is best gained through experience, that is to say, by examining the making of one's own speech sounds. For example, take such a word as "buzzed"—speak it, moving slowly from sound to sound, analysing the sensation these give rather than listening to the noise they make.

The first sound, the consonant "b", begins with closed lips, which hold back the breath stream.

¹ For good scale intonation make for a high 3rd and a high 7th in ascending. In melodic minors sing a low 3rd and high 6th and 7th ascending, and sing wide whole tones between the tonic and 7th, the 7th and 6th, and the 4th and 3rd degrees descending.

The second sound, a vowel, follows the crisp release of the lips. If a mirror is used, the lower jaw will be seen to drop a little, the teeth are about half an inch apart, the tongue is rather flat in the mouth, but slightly raised at the back, the lips are open-rounded.

The third sound, the consonant "z", brings the lower jaw up again, practically closes the teeth, allows the lips to assume a neutral position and lifts the tip and front of the tongue close to the top gum immediately behind the teeth. The sides of the tongue are pressed against the top teeth and the breath stream escapes through the narrow channel left between the tip of the tongue and the top gum.

The fourth sound, the consonant "d", closes this narrow channel by bringing the tip of the tongue firmly against the top gum, without moving any other part of the tongue, thus checking the breath stream again. This sound is completed by releasing the contact of tongue-tip and gum, thus allowing the breath to escape.¹

This word, or group of sounds, gives us one vowel and three consonants. We find that in making the vowel we do not impede the breath stream but modify it by the position of the tongue and lips (i.e. by the shape of the mouth cavity). In making the consonants, however, we have stopped the breath stream for two of them, and for the other driven it through so narrow a channel that friction was audible.

Thus the distinction between vowels and consonants is clear—vowels result from the free passage of the breath stream through the adjustable mouth cavity, while consonants result from obstructing the breath stream as it passes through the mouth. Vowels are always voiced sounds.

¹ In order to avoid phonetic terminology, these descriptions are of necessity rather wordy and cannot be meticulously exact. If they are translated into movement as they are read, they will be found helpful in making the articulation movements clear to those who have not previously examined them.

Consonants may be made with or without voice. In the following pairs of consonants, the first of each pair is voiceless and the second voiced:

p, b; t, d; f, v; s, z.

Examination of these sounds shows that their mouth-articulation is identical, and that they differ only in the use of voice.

Follow up this "slow-motion" examination of these sounds by trying to adjust the strength with which the articulating actions are performed. Increase the energy behind the flow of breath, and feel the stimulating effect this has on the muscles of lips and tongue.

In this particular sequence of sounds three of the movable speech organs were specifically used: lips, tongue, and lower jaw. The fourth, the soft palate, closed the passage to the nose and remained in the raised position throughout. In order to become aware of the movement of this organ, it is necessary to introduce a nasal sound ("m", "n" or "ng") into articulation.

Place the back of the hand just below the nostrils and articulate slowly the word "mutton". The breath stream will be felt on the hand for "m", not for the following vowel or for "t", but again for "n".

This proves that the soft palate is lowered for "m", raised for "ut", and lowered again for "n". By dwelling on the articulation of each sound it is possible to feel the movement of the soft palate, particularly when passing from "t" to "n".

We can watch the soft palate move by using a mirror, and repeating the sounds "ah", "ng". It will be found that it is always easier to feel movement in the mouth when there is less temptation to listen to what is being done. Consequently examination of articulating processes is more successful on voiceless than on voiced sounds. The voiceless counterpart of "buzzed" (buzzd) is "pust", with the vowel shaped but not voiced.

This first-hand acquaintance with our speech habits leads to some interesting discoveries and explains a few of our pronunciation prejudices.

We say "news" with a "z", but "newspaper" with an "s"! The influence of voiceless "p" has caused us to replace "z" with voiceless "s". The same happens in "five" and "fivepence", and the reverse in "goose" and "gooseberry".

In the sound sequence "ndm" in "grandmother", we spare our soft palate an extra movement by leaving out "d", an oral sound between two nasal ones.¹ As "n" is a nasal "d" (the tongue articulation is the same for both sounds) this omission appears quite natural in swift colloquial speech. In more formal types of speaking, assimilations such as these are not so common, but there are some so well established that to avoid them now seems pedantic. In any case, the written form of a word is no guide to its pronunciation. "Shepherd" and "leopard" are alike in their vowel sounds, and the second syllable of "cabbage" and "porridge" are alike to the ear. It is only the eye which tries to persuade us that they are different, and the eye has no jurisdiction over speech. It is the ear which sits in judgment.

Articulation is immensely important to speech. It is the basis of intelligibility. It is, also, a means to more significant utterance. Just as a keen and varied sense of touch is essential in a pianist so is sensitive articulation necessary to a speaker. It is a tool which, like all other tools, must be kept in good order by the craftsman and its proper use fully understood and carried out.

Both singers and speakers need to study the use of consonants. There is a tendency to think that crisp consonants are inimical to vocal tone. It has been said that they should be articulated as lightly as possible,

¹ Individual speakers may retain the "d" but the more common practice is to omit it.

so as to avoid interruption of the stream of vocal sound. Such an argument ignores the plain fact that if words are spoken or sung they are meant to be clearly heard, and without firm, flexible articulation this will not happen. Listeners do not object to consonants!

Suggestions for Consonant Practice for Speakers and Singers.

When consonants have been examined individually as previously suggested, practise repeating such phrases as the following:

Plosives:

What a little bit of hot biscuit.
Put it in the last basket.
The kitchen coal is in the black basket.
What a lot of little bottles.
Don't meddle in matters out of your ken.

Fricatives:

Swerve swiftly to the left.
Fetch the fresh fish first.
Throw the first three sifters through the thicket.
It's very foolish to vie so violently with Fanny.
The value of five vast vats of fat was fabulous.

Nasals:

Ring the gong twenty times.
Norman can be annoying when he sings out of tune.
Ninety-nine men out of a hundred know nothing of astronomy.

Some special difficulties:

He asks for gifts of posts.
He toasts the generous acts of past guests.
He thrusts the eighth post into the earth's surface.
Multiply the width by the breadth.
Films and film stars are peculiarly popular.

For further practice, work at the words of the patter songs in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and any swift, light verse such as *The Three Little Foxes* (A. A. Milne), *The Bustle Maker* (Patrick Barrington), *William I* (Herbert and Eleanor Farjeon).

Points to Watch in Practice.

Work slowly until accuracy and ease are established. Then increase the pace. The feeling for the smooth flow and continuity of the phrase should underlie and support the activity of articulation.

Avoid over-exaggeration of articulating movements. This is particularly easy to do in singing, but speakers can fall into the same error. Listeners call it "mouth-ing" and dislike it intensely. Final consonants are sometimes marred by the addition of a vowel, through over-emphasis and careless articulation. For example, "dark town" sounds like "dark-er town-er".

Voiced sounds are usually weaker than voiceless ones and therefore need watching. It is necessary to see that the breath force is as strong for them as for the voiceless ones. Thus v, th (*this*), z, b, d, g, will need especial care.

Articulation is a physical activity and an enjoyable one. Do not allow the thought of practice to cause muscular tension or a sense of strain and difficulty. Experiment creatively with speech sounds and enjoy them.

Pronunciation.

By pronunciation is meant the articulation of vowel sounds. Consonants do not vary greatly from speaker to speaker but vowels do. Every dialect has a set of vowel sounds peculiar to itself and unintelligible to those living in another part of the country.

Since in these days we are all likely to travel about our own country and to work in districts other than our birthplace, a common dialect is essential. Whatever form of spoken English we acquire as children, we need a second universal form which will make us intelligible to speakers of English the world over. There are those who, from childhood, speak this common dialect, but for most of us it is necessary that we acquire it as part of our equipment for living a full and harmonious life.

The recognition of this necessity has sprung from our growing sense of social responsibility. In this country, dialect speech is a mark of division between the various social levels, and can be a very real handicap. Much is being done to remove this handicap, but perhaps the first essential to its removal has not yet been fully recognized, namely that speech is personal to the speaker. It is part of his reaction to his situation, and development of his speech implies both a development in himself to free him within his situation and also a readjustment of those factors in his situation which are responsible for his limited use of speech.

It is true that when a generation arises whose speech is adequate to the needs of daily life, the worst forms of social inequality and injustice will have disappeared from our national life.

Meanwhile, the problem of pronunciation must be tackled, and tackled from the human angle first. Commercial and æsthetic considerations must not blind us to the importance of the personal aspect of speech. It is easy to condemn certain "accents", to dislike them, and to endeavour by the external application of rules and precepts to remove them. But such a course is rather like a badly aimed boomerang, which returns to the user having accomplished little for all the expenditure of energy. Speech develops because of an inner stimulus to use to the full a vital human gift, and enjoyment of the use of this gift is the spur to its

improvement for any purpose. But there will be no enjoyment if a feeling of personal ineffectiveness and inadequacy is induced by well-meaning but mistaken interference from outside.

Consequently, study of pronunciation must be an adventure in speech, undertaken because of that inner compulsion which animates all great adventures, and not, primarily, for reasons of material gain or social advancement. In all probability these will be added unto us but—the adventure is the thing!

Vowels of the Common Dialect.

Without the help of phonetic knowledge and the use of phonetic script, it is not possible to write accurately about vowel sounds, and it will not be attempted here. Readers who wish for full information are referred to the bibliography, and are advised to pursue their studies under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

There are, however, as with consonants, certain experiments which can be made, and, granted a reasonably good ear, these should lead to a development in control over vowel sounds.

It has already been stated ¹ that a vowel sound is a result of the free passage of a stream of vocal sound through the mouth cavity. The shape of this cavity is modified by movements of the tongue, lips and lower jaw.

A change of shape results in another vowel sound. This change can be heard, felt and, to some extent, seen.

Thus there are three ways of examining vowels. Use a mirror and speak, strongly, this syllable "yee".² Hold the "y" longer than is usual and move slowly into the "ee" sound.

¹ Page 30.

² "y" is an "ee" glide. Placed before the vowel "ee" in an exercise such as this, it ensures the correct position of the tongue and lips for this vowel.

The lips are spread from side to side (the position for a smile). The teeth are together. Repeat, using breath only, and no voice. The tongue-tip will be felt against the inner surface of the lower teeth. The part of the tongue behind the tip will be felt to be raised towards the roof of mouth.

The pitch of this breathed vowel will be heard to be high.

Now, still using the mirror, relax the lips and tongue a little from the previous position and breathe through this slightly altered shape. The pitch of this breathed vowel will be lower than is the preceding one.

The tongue is felt as being lower in the mouth. The shape of the lips is seen as different.

Now voice both these vowels, and hear the difference between them. They are both recognizable as "ee", but the first is the one accepted as belonging to the "common dialect" (standard English).

Now, say your own "ee" vowel, in such a syllable as "green" or "tree". Compare it with the other two. It may be like one of them, or still another variety. Should it differ from the first, examine the amount of difference and practise adjusting your own to the standard sound. Before long, it will be as easy to make one as the other. The next step is to remember to use the standard sound in formal speaking. This will take time, because speech habits are deeply rooted.

Repeat the experiment with the syllable "woo".¹ When this syllable is unvoiced, its inherent pitch will be heard as being roughly an octave below that of "yee". Dr. Aiken in his book *Voice*² has worked out a scale of vowel pitches as the basis of pronunciation. Granted a good ear, this is a great help towards correct shaping of the mouth cavity for vowels.

¹ "w" is an "oo" glide. By lengthening "w" the standard pronunciation of "oo" is made.

² *Voice*, by Aiken, revised edition, 1938.

There are twelve pure vowels and nine diphthongs (glide sounds) in the common dialect.

They occur in the following words:

Pure Vowels.

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| 1. seat: | } | lips spread. |
| 2. sit: | | teeth together for 1, gradually open |
| 3. set: | | |
| 4. sat: | | |
| 5. calm: | } | teeth well apart, lips open-rounded. |
| 6. not: | | the teeth gradually close, and the |
| 7. ought: | | |
| 8. put: | | |
| 9. boot: | } | teeth together, lips close-rounded and protruded. |
| 10. but: | | teeth as open as in "ought"—lips rounded but not protruded. |
| 11. early: | } | lips neutral in shape, |
| 12. china: | | teeth slightly apart. |

Diphthongs.

In making diphthongs, the tongue starts in one vowel position and moves immediately to another vowel position. In the common dialect, diphthongs are heard in the following words:

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| 13. day: | spread lips, teeth very nearly together. | |
| 14. go: | rounded lips, teeth very nearly together. | |
| 15. my: | spread lips, teeth $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart. | |
| 16. now: | rounded lips, teeth well apart. | |
| 17. boy: | rounded lips, teeth about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. | |
| 18. here: | } | All finish with the twelfth vowel sound. |
| 19. there: | | |
| 20. more: | | |
| 21. poor: | | |

The twelfth vowel needs some mention as it is extremely important in speech, but is never shown in print. Its use is essential to speech rhythm. It replaces almost all the pure vowels when they occur in unstressed syllables, thus reducing the prominence of these rhythmically weak syllables. Since English speech-rhythm depends on the alternation, in varying patterns, of strong with weak syllables, the value of this neutral vowel, as it is called, can scarcely be over-emphasized.

Examples of its use in speech are given below, where it is shown by the symbol "ə", placed over the vowel it replaces.¹

I con'sider that your 'father and 'mother 'showed
 'great 'kindness.
 'It was ə 'long 'way to the 'shops.
 A 'piece of 'paper.

Since the natural rhythm of speech must never be destroyed it follows that, however carefully we speak, we must not omit the proper use of this vowel. A tendency to think of its use as slovenly is due to the fact that it is not seen in the printed word, and good speech, in the past, has been confused with pronouncing words as they are *seen*. Print cannot show rhythm, and the neutral vowel is a rhythmic device.

In order to develop an appreciation of vowel sounds in all their variety and to acquire the power of selection, ear-training is essential. It is not always possible to work with a phonetician, but there are excellent gramophone records, which provide at least a beginning for those who are interested.²

Broadcasting offers unlimited opportunities for listen-

¹ Strong or accented syllables are shown by the mark ' placed immediately before the syllable.

² The most useful are included in the bibliography.

ing to various types of speech, and for training the ear to work unaided by the eye.

As we move about the streets, either on foot or in 'buses and trams, we can use our ears to discover the kinds of sounds our neighbours make. We can begin to listen to the sounds which we ourselves make. It is out of our experience of sounds that we shall eventually weave the chosen pattern of our own speech.

Pronunciation Differences for Speakers and Singers.

Though speech and song spring from the same root, and are governed by the same underlying principles, yet they differ in detail.

The somewhat irregular rhythm of a spoken phrase must be adjusted—stretched or compressed—to fill the regular measure of a poetic line.

For example, we might overhear this scrap of conversation. "Where are they?" " 'Tommy's 'gone to the 'grocer to 'fetch me a 'pound of 'tea, 'Mary's in the 'garden and I 'don't know 'where 'John is." This sounds rhythmic already, if we are sufficiently aware of rhythm to notice it. Written in a four-line verse pattern,

Tommy's gone to the grocer
To fetch me a pound of tea,
Mary's in the garden
And I don't know where John is,

where the line suggests measure to the eye, it becomes apparent that very little adjustment is needed to make the irregular speech rhythm adequate to the verse form. The chief difference lies in the need to lengthen slightly the stressed syllables and to stretch the tiny pause between the spoken phrases until the duration of each equals the poetic measure (in this case, four beats to the line).

Speech has its rests and tied notes just as music has, and the line of verse has its counterpart in the bar of music.

This stretching of speech rhythm into poetic rhythm is a half-way house, as it were, towards the vocal sustaining of musical rhythm. To sing a melody requires an extended sustained use of voice. A singer has to meet the demands made on voice by music and speech. Success lies in the right balancing of these demands one against the other.

Vowels in Speech and Song.

Speech tunes slide rapidly from syllable to syllable with no fixed intervals.

In song intervals are fixed and sliding is unpardonable save in a few instances.

This slide in speech together with its irregular rhythm implies that we never stay long on one note and therefore the difficulty of blending the fixed inherent pitch of a vowel with the sustained musical note does not occur. But it does occur in song and therefore sung vowels must, in many cases, vary from their spoken originals.

Vowels and Vocal Compass.

The compass of the speaking voice is really as great as that of the singing voice, but speakers are not constantly using their whole range as singers are. The normal speaking range is roughly an octave, extending to an octave and a half or more as emphasis is used. So swift is the tonal slide through this range that few people, either as speakers or listeners, are aware of its extent. The somewhat toneless use of the speaking voice, which is unfortunately common, increases the difficulty of hearing the vocal range of

speech tunes. A well produced speaking voice is always called "musical" because tune is heard moving through a wide compass. Yet even the most musical of speakers does not use his compass as a singer inevitably must, nor does he have to sustain syllables on very high or very low notes. His vowel sounds occur in conditions of pitch and compass natural to speech, while a singer has to use them in conditions natural to music but often unnatural to speech.

The first four vowels in the list already given—the sounds in the words *seat*, *sit*, *set*, *sat*—though they encourage forward production are not the easiest to sing on the upper range of the voice. These vowels have a high fixed pitch of their own, and a flat natural quality as compared with the round quality of the vowels numbered 5 to 10.

In singing these vowels the lips are often slightly rounded and the tongue-position retracted. This alters their inherent pitch and makes them easier to sustain. The danger for singers lies in making too great an adjustment so that the essential distinction between the vowel sounds is lost altogether.

Composers can help singers a good deal in the setting of words, if they recognize the natural difficulty of sustaining certain vowel sounds on a high note.

Singers cannot make as much use of the neutral vowel as speakers do—again because the weak syllable often falls on a sustained note, and the strong form of the vowel must be used.

If we read this phrase from Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," we pronounce the second syllable of "comfort" with a very short "or" vowel, almost a cross between "or" and the neutral "ə", but in Handel's setting of these words in the *Messiah*, this same syllable has to be considerably sustained and therefore the sound "or" is used.

Thus singers must modify the spoken form of vowels in order to satisfy the demands of melody. Since the

words of songs are, however, meant to be heard, and understood, it is necessary that the modification be reasonable and not exaggerated.

Consonants in Speech and Song.

The use of consonants in speaking and singing does not differ very much. In both cases it should be recognized that articulation can be varied to suit the occasion. Swift, dramatic, robust material needs clean-cut, almost staccato consonants: quiet, contemplative material, on the other hand, requires firm, smooth, sustained utterance—a legato touch. In every case consonants are to be used because they are significant, not avoided because they present difficulties. Whatever singers may think, listeners like to hear words, if words are being sung, and they should not be expected to guess them. Two notable singers whose use of consonants is an unfailing delight are Dorothy Silk and Keith Faulkner.

Length of Spoken Sounds in Speech and Song.

In spoken English the length of individual sounds is variable, depending always upon the immediate context. This free use of length is one of the attributes of our speech rhythm. Broadly speaking, sounds in stressed syllables are longer than similar sounds in unstressed syllables. That is to say that we can, and do, weaken the prominence of a sound by shortening it. Equally, we increase its prominence by lengthening it. Actually this use of length spreads over the entire syllable, vowels and consonants being alike affected.

When we interpret poetic measure in terms of the elastic rhythms of speech, what we do is to lengthen and shorten the syllables and make pauses between groups of words. Here we are using a mode of expression, consciously and within definite limits, which

in everyday speech we use unconsciously and spontaneously.

In singing, the length of speech sounds is subservient to the melody pattern. Singers often have to fit a short syllable to a long note. This obviously must modify pronunciation as has already been suggested.

Here again composers who understand English speech rhythm can often so set words that the natural rhythm and the musical one are identical in the fall of stress (accent). Our spoken syllables behave like notes in music—a fact often lost sight of in a study of scansion, which superimposes upon English the sound pattern of another language. Musical notation gives a more exact rendering of our syllable trip than does the scansion.

Speech Tunes and Musical Tunes.

The rise and fall of the voice is significant both in speech and song, but speech tunes have an exact concrete significance absent in the abstract melodies of music.

It has already been stated that in folk songs the melody is really a speech tune. Vocal embellishments have often been added, but still the significant notes of the melody reproduce the line of the speech tune.

The compass of the sung melody may be greater than the compass of the speech tune but the shape is the same—the relative levels of sound on which the words are placed are the same in both the spoken and the sung tunes. Probably this accounts largely for the intense satisfaction which folk songs give us. They seem inevitable. It may account too for the feeling of disappointment we have in the modern “arrangement” of an old folk song. The perfect balance between speech and song has been upset.

Again, here is the difficulty in re-translating the words of a song. Melody is universal but speech-tunes

cannot be separated from their component words and are untranslatable.

The most successful song composers are those who, having chosen the words they wish to express in music, keep in their created melody as nearly as possible the natural shape of their spoken tunes.¹

Singers, too, need to feel the natural tune of the words even when the melody they must sing is different from it.

Some Common Faults in Speaking and Singing.

THROATY TONE:

Both in speaking and singing, this type of voice is due to faulty production. The muscles in the throat are stiffened, the back of the tongue is raised and probably the whole tongue is retracted. The effect of this is to trap breath—and therefore voice—in the pharynx. The resonators of mouth and nose are not fully used and in consequence the quality of the tone is unbalanced.

This tension in the throat may be due to nervousness or simply to lack of adequate breath control.

The remedy lies in freeing the throat² and directing the breath well forward in the mouth. Singers should breathe in easily and quietly and expel the breath on a soft "oo" or "aw" on a note of medium pitch. Nervousness is another name for sensitivity. It is nothing to be ashamed of, but on the contrary, something to be thankful for, as it is an inevitable part of the artistic temperament. Control of nervousness is essential, and possible to attain when we cease to be afraid of it. It interferes with vocal production because it paralyzes nervous and muscular energy. The first

¹ One of the modern English song writers, Roger Quilter, has brought about this ideal combination—to sing "To Daisies" or "Love's Philosophy" is to realize this.

² Suggestions for developing adequate breathing are given on p. 18.

step towards its control lies in the conscious effort to supply energy to the process of making vocal sound.

A sound maxim is—be nervous if you must, but do not waste energy in apologizing for it, and do not make it an excuse for weak breath-control.

Poor physical health is inimical to good voice production. Again, the voice will be "throaty", but instead of tone we hear breath. Consistent practice on the lines already suggested will help to improve the physique and therefore the voice, but other measures must be taken to build up the body—nourishing food, rest and the cessation of worry. There is real therapeutic value in the use of the voice, either in speaking or singing. It stimulates spirit, mind and body and releases pent-up vitality.

WOBBLE:

Wobble in singing is usually caused by faulty breath control, by forcing high notes, or by forcing the natural power of the voice. To cure it:

- (a) Examine breathing and establish control over it.
- (b) Sing softly.
- (c) Use the voice in easy compass.

Avoid strain and muscular tension in throat and upper chest.

NASAL TONE:

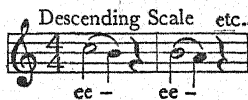
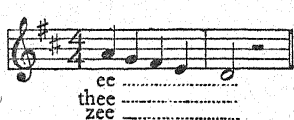
Nasality in speech is due to weak action of the soft palate, which fails to close the passage to the nose during phonation. Too much breath passes directly into the nasal cavities and the mouth cavity cannot supply its full share of resonation. The same is true of singing. To correct this it is necessary to gain control over the movements of the soft palate.¹ The soft palate rises during a yawn, and it is easy to feel the

¹ See p. 31.

stretch at the back of the mouth, as it closes the nasal passage; the back of the tongue sinks and the lower jaw drops. Once we are conscious of these movements, it is possible to perform them at will, without yawning and with the lips closed.

This "open" throat is essential to the production of good tone.

For singers, the vowel "ee" is a useful sound to use for practice, as it promotes the raising of the soft palate. Such consonants as "th", "t", "d", "s" and "z" direct the tongue forward.



MONOTONE:



Zela sees these deeds are deep

When should the Training of the Voice begin?

Provided that the training is dissociated from platform performance, it can be begun with tiny children. Naturally in these early days, the aim is to develop the use of the natural gift of voice. Consequently all speaking and singing is informal—a game to be played, an activity to be enjoyed.

An important part of this development is ear-training both in music and speech. Vitality and spontaneity are far more important than mere technical facility. This latter will develop through speaking and through singing if the children are introduced to material which stimulates their desire to express their thoughts and feelings. Conversely, the study of material unsuitable to their age and environment will kill the creative impulse and lead to artificiality in expression.

IN SPEECH:

Specific training can begin after leaving school. Actually if speech has been rightly developed during the school years, both voice and speech should be adequate for all normal purposes. Only those whose career definitely demands a more formal study of speech will need specialized training. Among these will be actors and actresses, elocutionists, clergymen, lecturers, teachers, telephonists—that is to say those whose work is done largely through the medium of the spoken word.

IN SINGING:

There is a certain amount of controversy among authorities as to when real training should begin, but a generally accepted opinion is that the age of eighteen is suitable for girls, provided that there is no intention on the part of either pupil or teacher to aim at public performance in a very short time. Voice training cannot be hurried, neither must the compass of the voice be extended beyond the point where notes can be sung with ease. For boys the age varies according to the development of the voice after the breaking stage. Generally it is a year or two later than for girls.

It is obvious that the school years are of great importance in the development of voice and of a desire to use it. It is a pity that our educational system at present allows far too little time for oral activity, even while its importance is admitted.

Classification of Voices.

Voices are not classified in speech. Natural differences in pitch and quality are used with judgment by producers in the dramatic sphere, but, generally speaking,

a well developed voice can be used in any part of its wide compass, according to the needs of the situation. Within the compass of one individual voice, low, medium and high pitch are relatively significant. We accept, in speech, the wide variety in individual voices because all are used according to the same underlying principles. Speech has no harmony in the musical sense, and therefore we do not need to compare the compass of one voice with another. Speech is melody only, music is melody and harmony. Consequently singing voices are classified according to compass, as well as to vocal quality.

Here are the classifications with the normal compass shown.

Soprano.

Dramatic. A full voice, with great declamatory power.

Light. Often called "Coloratura". A high range, great agility, and flute-like quality.

Mezzo-Soprano.

Combines some of the qualities of Soprano and Contralto.

Contralto.

Deep voice.

The true contralto voice is rare.

Male Alto.

Cultivated in early days in Britain, because of its use in old Church Music. Not regarded as a solo voice. Contraltos began to replace male altos about 1884, though there was considerable protest.

Tenor.

Robust. Full, vigorous, dramatic voice.

Lyric. A lighter vocal quality.

"Tenor" is a generic term used to describe a special type of male voice which from its extent of compass, development of high notes, and characteristics of timbre, is suitable for taking the leading part in the melody in male part-singing. Tenors are becoming increasingly rare.

Bass.

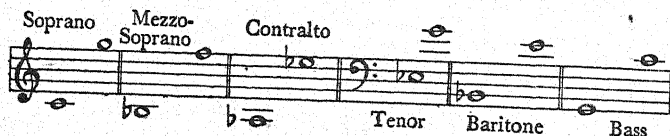
Deep bass (basso profundo), low range, powerful.

Lyric bass (basso cantante), similar to other lyric types of voices.

Baritone.

The average male voice.

Compass of Early Cultivation of Voice.



CHAPTER III

Interpretation in Speech and Song

"... Music do I hear? Ha! Ha! Keep time: How sour sweet music is when time is broke and no proportion kept."—KING RICHARD II.

CREATOR and interpreter are partners, differing in their respective functions, yet equally necessary to any form of art.

In the visual arts—painting and sculpture—the function of interpreter is performed by each sensitive gazer.

In the aural arts—music and speech—the interpreter is a link between the creator and the audience. There is no audience for the visual arts as there must be for the aural. The reason for this seems to lie in the nature of sound itself, which cannot be fully expressed in eye-symbols, whether they be notes or words. A painting or piece of sculpture once created has fixed form. As it is, it remains. Though thousands of eyes study it, none can alter a line. Lack of sensitivity in the beholder, who is the interpreter, cannot affect a painting or a statue. That which might be said to correspond in aural art to light and shade, to line and plastic form in visual art, cannot be expressed in visual symbols. Varying intensity of tone must be heard, it cannot be seen; elastic sound-rhythms are set free from the limitations of the compositor's straight line and the writer's mathematical precision of metre.

Consequently music and spoken words have no

fixed form which, once uttered, remains intact upon the air. From the written symbols the creator's work must be re-created. Hence that trinity of creator, interpreter and audience in the aural arts, and the supreme importance of interpretation in music and speech.

It is true that it is possible to read prose and poetry to oneself, blending the function of audience and interpreter. There is a translation of printed symbols into sounds heard with inner hearing. But this ability is denied to many. Words must reach their ears through the voice of another before their full significance is appreciated.

Thus the function of the interpreter is clear. While the creator works from the idea to the symbol, the interpreter works from the symbol towards the idea it symbolizes. For this he needs, first and foremost, the great gift of intuitive understanding. Without this, symbols remain just symbols, divorced from the vital force which is the reason for their existence. They are mere signs divorced from living experience.

Interpretation is not a form of self-expression through the medium of music and words. It is, rather, self-sublimation. To develop self-expression, the desire for it must be lost, and its place be taken by the recreative expression of the ideas in the words or music. The interpreter should be a bridge between creator and audience—a bridge, not a barrier.

To every human being is given, in some degree, this gift of apprehension—this imaginative sensitivity. It should be developed by every possible means. Nevertheless, there are some in whom this awareness in the form of recreative ability is so keen that it may be regarded as a special gift. They are the interpreters. In the same way, outstanding creative ability stamps the gifted individual with the hall-mark of poet, composer, painter and so forth. It seems necessary,

if we are to keep a balanced judgment, that we should recognize degrees of interpretative power.

Then there is the awareness of the audience to be considered. Audiences may share the experience re-created by the interpreter, but be unable to re-create it satisfactorily for themselves because sufficient executant ability has not been given them.

Again, there are interpreters who have been blessed—or cursed!—with great executant facility and who delight in musical or verbal acrobatics which require muscular agility, but whose imaginative insight demands but little effort on the part of the audience. The audience, missing some essential stimulus, inclines to think itself less “artistic” than this performer, but it is wrong!

There is a diversity of gifts, but the same spirit! We must recognize this diversity, honouring all in their degree, developing all to the limit of individual capacity.

Any study of interpretation must include the responsibility of interpreters and audience towards each other. It is a great pity that we have lost sight of this dual responsibility in our respect for individual performance. It has had a bad effect on both audience and performer, and through them, on all forms of artistic expression. It is for this reason, among others, that everyone should be given the opportunity to develop his capacity for interpretation both by doing and listening. We listen better and therefore receive more when we have had some experience of “doing”, and we are finer executants when we have learned to listen and, through listening, to respect the sensitivity of an audience. Furthermore, by realizing that great gifts of apprehension can exist without a corresponding executant ability, and, conversely, that great executant ability is not always balanced by sensitive and imaginative understanding, we shall adjust the present unequal balance between audience and interpreters,

with great benefit to both and to the Arts in which they delight.

The responsibility of the audience is to be imaginatively receptive and responsive. The responsibility of the interpreter is to apprehend and to re-create in communicable form. The responsibility of the creator is to create, under that spiritual compulsion which, in the act of creation, is independent of either audience or interpreter. Yet, in the aural arts at least, the work of the creator is completed by its performance and reception. Audience, interpreter and creator are all—and equally—necessary to each other and to that vital experience called Art.

Interpretation and Technique.

Although, in its broadest sense, interpretation is a spiritual gift, in the specific sense it includes a study of the chosen artistic medium. Technique is a tool, and like all tools, should never be divorced, in the mind of its user, from its true purpose. The tool is not, and never can be, the thing it helps to create, yet without good tools and the ability to use them, the craftsman cannot complete his work successfully. Technique, rightly used, never obtrudes itself. *Ars est celare artem*¹—a well-worn truth, but, still, a truth. Ease and effortlessness are its hallmarks.

To some, the study of technique implies a cramping of the free expression of artistry. It would be truer to say that it acts as a check on undisciplined self-expression. Both writers and composers must understand how to use the technique of their respective mediums. Their interpreters cannot escape the same necessity.

In both speech and song, an understanding and recognition of rhythm is one of the first essentials. Rhythm is a living force manifesting itself, on the

¹ "Art is to conceal art."

material plane, in a variety of ways. Rhythm rules our lives, and all our ills, spiritual, mental and material, are the result of our being out-of-step, so to speak—moving contrary to the rhythm of life. Every medium used by the artist, has rhythm as its vital core. Thus, interpreters must study, in their chosen medium, the particular pattern through which this essential rhythmic principle finds expression.

Structure of Speech and Music.

Spoken English and music are, rhythmically, very closely akin. Any spoken language is a form of music, and it so happens that our system of stress results in a patterning of syllables almost exactly like that of notes in musical sentences. Consequently, a comparison of the structures of speech and music is illuminating, both for speakers and singers.

In both speech and music the structural unit is a group of syllables or notes.

In speech, this unit is called the sense-group. In any given context it contains an idea.

Sense-groups combine to form breath-groups. The breath-group may be a complete sentence, or breath-groups may combine to form a long sentence. In colloquial speech, owing to our habit of reducing sentences to their most significant word, we find sentence, breath-group and sense-group reduced to a single word.

For example: What? Never! Yes. Thanks.

The finer the form of the language we use and the deeper its significance, the greater the number of sense-groups within the breath-group, and the more complex the patterning of breath-groups within the sentence.

Sense-groups are heard distinctly because each is given a tonal pattern—a tune. Thus, each succeeding tonal pattern, heard by the ear, suggests a fresh idea.

Here is a simple example of this basic principle. It should be spoken aloud.¹ One long sense-group:²

— . . — . . — — — . .
 The 'table was 'laden with 'scones, 'cakes, 'biscuits and 'jams

Several groups:

. — . . — . . / | / | — . | .)
 The 'table was 'laden with 'scones, 'cakes, 'biscuits and 'jams

The second rendering brings to the ear a more vivid picture of an excellent tea!

Still more vivid is this grouping:

. — . .) | .) |) |) | .)
 The 'table was 'laden with 'scones, 'cakes, 'biscuits and 'jams

In this last rendering, each group is given added distinctiveness by the use of the falling cadence, rather than the rising one, while the gradually increasing range of pitch in each group adds emphasis. The word "laden" gains in significance because "the table was laden" is, now, an idea complete in itself, though further enhanced by the addition of other complementary ideas.

¹ It is not possible to deal adequately with Intonation here. In *A Handbook of English Intonation* (Armstrong & Ward, pub. Heffer & Co.), full information is given. The system of transcription used here is taken from this book.

² — represents a level stressed syllable.
 . represents an unstressed syllable.
) represents a falling stressed syllable.
 / represents a rising stressed syllable.
 —) represents a rise on a two-syllabled word where the first syllable is stressed.

In spontaneous speaking the choice of tonal patterns is subconscious, depending upon the emotional reaction of the speaker to the immediate situation.

In prepared speaking, the choice of pattern is conscious, particularly where the speaker uses the words of another, as in the speaking of prose or poetry.

Hence the necessity for recognizing sense-groups (ideas), and their blending into breath-groups. Behind the recognition of pattern, and permeating it, lies the sensitive understanding already referred to. It determines the conscious choice and infuses the technical grasp of detail with significant vitality.

The Musical Sentence.

The musical sentence, identical in principle with its spoken equivalent, differs from it only in that it cannot contain less than two phrases. The argument progresses, as in speech, through the sentence towards some form of cadence.

Example:

Mowing the Barley



The most common form of musical sentence is that which contains two phrases, the normal length of each phrase being four phrases. There is no fixed rule, however, and a sentence may contain three or four phrases, each of which differs in length from the rest.

Thus the structure both of speech and music is based on the unit of the group of sounds, and in both the patterning of groups can be endlessly varied.

The connexion between one musical sentence and the next is made clear to the ear by the use of cadences.

These cadences are called:

Plagal Cadence.

Perfect Cadence.

Imperfect or Half-Cadence.

Interrupted Cadence.

Here are examples of them:

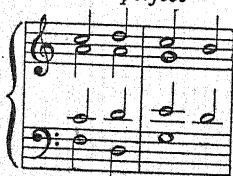
Plagal



Perfect



Imperfect



Interrupted



Speakers, unfamiliar with cadences in the musical sense, may appreciate their significance from the following comparison of cadences with certain types of spoken phrases.

IN MUSIC

Perfect Cadence

Both final cadences in music, but the perfect cadence has a more sharply defined finality.

Plagal Cadence

The plagal cadence is more usually found where the mood is contemplative.¹

Imperfect Cadence

Used rather as the semicolon in print.

IN SPEECH

A final statement: i.e. I can't come.

A non-final statement: i.e. I don't think I can come; I wish I could come; I'm afraid I must go.

The semicolon links a series of phrases together with a somewhat cumulative effect, while giving to each a greater sense of distinctiveness than would the use of the comma: i.e. The sun shone fiercely; not a leaf stirred on the branches overhead; not a dog barked; the village was asleep.

It is also used to link a simple statement with the enlargement of it which follows immediately, as in this verse:

Very old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the briar's boughs
When March winds wake
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.²

¹ The plagal cadence is the cadence frequently used for the "Amen" which closes many hymn tunes. The meaning of "Amen" is "So let it be", and the finality here is that of a fervently expressed wish or hope or desire and not that of a statement of certain fact. The analogy between music and speech here cannot be exact but merely suggestive.

² "All That's Past", Walter de la Mare.

IN MUSIC

IN SPEECH

Interrupted Cadence

A break in the thread of thought, leading to an extension of the melody, when the ear expected the usual familiar closing cadence. It holds therefore the element of surprise.

It is not very easy to express in a verbal example, but the preceding quotation from "All That's Past" is as good an illustration as any. The "—" marks the interrupted cadence, the unexpected break in the thought and the extension of the melody.

A very beautiful interrupted cadence is found in the slow movement of Beethoven's Sonata in E flat (op. 7), where the following passage occurs:

*Punctuation.*

In the written word, punctuation marks are indications of cadence. They should not be thought of as stops but rather as marks of progression, linking, not separating, groups of words. The full-stop, in particular, should not be interpreted always as if it were a perfect or final cadence. It does not dominate the ending of a sentence, it merely indicates some kind of closure. The logical connexion between this closure and the opening of the new sentence determines the degree of finality to be expressed. The term "full-stop" is a misnomer and speakers should be wide-awake to this fact.

Another much misunderstood mark is the comma. Most frequently it indicates the end of a breath-group. It has no influence at all upon tonal pattern, that is to say, it has no emotional significance. The old adage that the voice must be raised at a comma leads to artificial adjustment of speech tunes.

The phrase mark in music serves much the same purpose in indicating the group of notes forming the unit of the musical sentence.¹

The comma is used, too, in certain instances, to mark sense-groups for the convenience of the reader, who is thus spared the necessity of grouping the words correctly while reading at sight.

All writers accept the general principles of punctuation, but there is considerable variety in the use they make of individual symbols. Editors have their prejudices too, as well as moments of aberration, so that interpreters must not consider themselves bound by printed punctuation symbols, where these seem to offend against the meaning of a passage. Punctuation—cadence—is an inherent part of content, and must be discovered by the study of internal evidence.

Form and Climax.

Recognition of the grouping of words and notes is obviously essential to the realization of the progression of the argument in any given passage. In progression we discover the meaning of form and climax. The relationship of idea to idea, their importance relative to each other and to the complete concept creates, inevitably, the shape of the whole. Climax is the culmination of the argument, the goal of progression, seen from the beginning and approached by a foreordained path. It is the top of the arch, signifi-

¹ In the example of a musical sentence on p. 57, the phrase marks are shown.

cant not in itself but in its relationship to the rest of the arch of which it is a part.

This progression is an integral part of rhythm. Form is an expression of rhythm, climax is a rhythmic development. Hence the necessity for studying structure in order that the rhythmic principle on which it is based may be made clear to the ear.¹

Within this phrase-rhythm is contained the rhythmic patterning of notes and syllables.

In fairly recent times,² the introduction of barlines in music has led to a more regular patterning of notes, without in the least destroying elasticity and variety in melodic design. Bars are to music what lines are to verse, a firm and satisfying framework for the support of intricate and lovely patterns of sound.

Since the bar—and also the line—is a measured period of time, recurring again and again throughout the duration of the poem or the musical composition, the listening ear receives double satisfaction—the delight of the even repetition of a familiar measure together with ever-varying intricate patterns woven out of it.

Development of responsiveness to these rhythmic patterns and practice in expressing them is a necessary part of the study of rhythm.

For the most part singers are already aware of the different note values, and the numerous ways in which these are combined within the musical sentence. Speakers, however, do not always realize that spoken syllables are analogous to notes of music, and that in spoken English they combine very much in the same way that notes do.

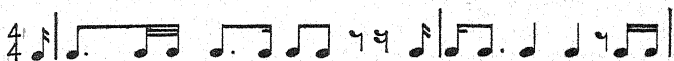
It is possible to indicate syllable-patterning by musical notation with a considerable degree of accuracy.

¹ Definitions of form in the strict musical and literary sense are given on pp. 78-87.

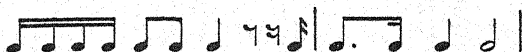
² The earliest known use of bar-lines dates from 1448, but they were not in common use until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Here is a verse from *Walk, Shepherdess, Walk!*¹

The lamb with the fleece of silver
Like summer sea-foam,
And the wether with the crystal bell
That leads them all home.



The lamb with the fleece of silver like summer sea foam, and the



wether with the crystal bell that leads them all home.

It should, perhaps, be emphasized that an analysis of the manifestations of rhythm, however interesting and valuable, can never be a substitute for inner responsiveness to rhythm. Rhythm is first and foremost an experience. Yet, of course, an analysis of rhythmic forms leads to deeper understanding and to a finer control of their conscious expression.

Eye-language and Ear-language.

I. IN SPEECH

It has already been mentioned that the written form of words and music cannot be regarded as exact translations of their sound-pattern. Enough has been said to suggest to speakers that print has very little in common with speech beyond intelligibility. Print cannot easily indicate speech rhythm or tune or varying degrees of emphasis, neither, since English is not a phonetic language, can it indicate pronunciation. Consequently, speaking from written notes or speaking memorized words demands an ability to translate print into spoken sounds. This ability implies a con-

¹ "Nursery Rhymes of London Town"—Eleanor Farjeon.

scious knowledge of speech habits and skill in adjusting them to the needs of the particular communication.

Pace.

In addition to the characteristics of speech already indicated, pace needs some consideration. One of the inevitable conditions attached to oral communication is that words, once uttered, cannot be recalled. The eye can retrace lines of print, as often as the reader chooses, but repetition of this kind for the ear is neither usual nor easily possible. Consequently, the communication must reach the ear at a pace which enables the listener to absorb its content without strain. Too slow a pace destroys rhythmic flow and continuity and reduces sense to nonsense. Too swift a pace makes it impossible for the ear—and through the ear, the brain—to retain more than a small proportion of the sounds which reach it.

Pace cannot be indicated in printed words. Interpreters, therefore, must be aware that the eye can read and absorb meaning more swiftly than the ear can hear and understand, and must use their experience as listeners to determine the pace at which they should speak.

In the æsthetic sense, pace is closely associated with the mood inherent in the situation which gives rise to utterance. Pace is suggested to the ear by the speed at which the spoken sounds succeed each other. This fact, considered in conjunction with the differing lengths of spoken syllables, brings to light an interesting point, namely that stressed monosyllables succeeding each other will sound much slower than a succession of stressed and unstressed syllables.

For example:

- (1) 'John 'ran to the 'shops.
- (2) 'Tommy 'trotted to the 'station.

There are three stressed syllables in each example, and even in colloquial speech our stresses fall at fairly regular intervals. Tap the stresses while speaking these two phrases. In both cases the pace of the stressed syllables is the same, but the second phrase seems to move more swiftly because it contains more spoken syllables.

Compare 'Three 'blind 'mice '——
and 'Merrily 'merrily 'shall I live 'now.

The period of time taken to say each phrase is the same, since the rest (silent beat) at the end of the first is an integral part of the pattern, but the second example seems swifter than the first.

The principle of variable length in speech sounds gives a suggestion of altered pace, though actually the measured pace of the beats has not changed.

Thus when speakers are faced with a pattern containing a large number of spoken syllables, they need not feel that the pace from beat to beat is necessarily swift, and that they have to hurry. Hurry is always unrhythmic and to be avoided. Once this point has been grasped, the question of pace from beat to beat is far easier to decide. For swift speech seems to depend more on the number of syllables to be spoken within each measured phrase than on the rate at which the stresses succeed each other. In comparison with music, the pace at which spoken words can move is limited because of their more concrete significance.

As a final example of this illusion of changing pace, here is the whole of *Three Blind Mice*.

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. Three | blind | mice | — |
| 2. See | how they | run | —they |
| 3. All ran | after the | farmer's | wife, who |
| 4. Cut off their | tails with a | carving | knife. Did |
| 5. Ever you | see such a | thing in your | life as |
| 6. Three | blind | mice | — |

Here we get more syllables added in each line from 2 to 5 and the effect of increasing pace helps the sense of a developing climax. Yet, without the feeling of measured pace from beat to beat, this illusory sense of pace would lose its delight and degenerate into a scramble. This brings us back to the importance of metric structure within the rhythmic progression.

Tempo Rubato.

Tempo Rubato (robbed time) is a musical term denoting a slight deviation from strict metrical time. Both speakers and singers should understand it. Actually the time is not "robbed", but borrowed and afterwards paid back.

Here is a musical illustration:



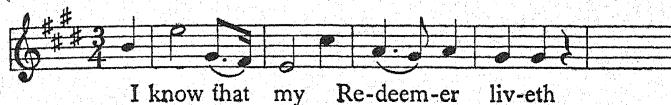
There is a slight acceleration of pace up to the climax (here, it is the highest note of the phrase) and a retarding of pace away from it, which balances the acceleration. This produces what may be termed average, or mean, tempo. The danger lies in overdoing this deviation from strict time, so that the average tempo is destroyed. An exaggerated use of *Tempo Rubato* is often heard from singers and pianists, particularly in the interpretation of works by composers of the Romantic period—Mendelssohn, Schubert, Chopin.

Generally speaking, it may be said that there are three main forms of *Tempo Rubato*.

1. Lengthening the first part of the phrase and hastening the second, feeling at the same time the true sensitivity of the phrase.

Larghetto

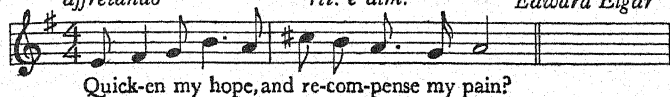
Handel



2. Hastening the first part and lengthening the second.

*affretando**rit. e dim.*

Edward Elgar

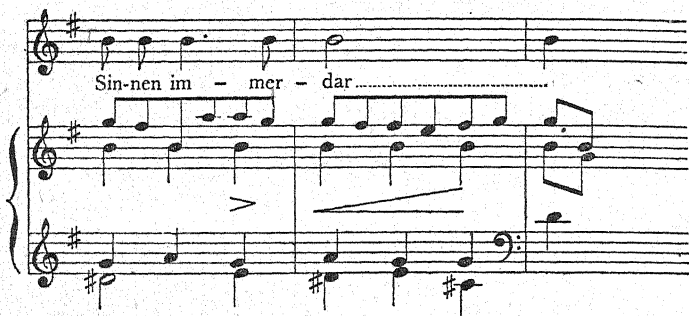


3. Combination of lengthening and hastening in the phrase or section. Great scope for putting this into practice can be obtained from the song *Ein Ton* by Cornelius, which is a monotone right through. The accompanist and singer must work together until the slight deviation from strict tempo in the phrasing of both words and accompaniment is perfectly coordinated.

Etwas bewegt

Peter Cornelius





The English translation by C. Hugo Taubach reads thus:

I hear a tone so wondrous rare;
It fills my heart, 'tis ever there—

PETER CORNELIUS.

Tempo Rubato is heard, too, from speakers of verse, who incline to borrow time for certain tempting phrases without realizing the necessity of repayment to restore the balance of rhythm.

Eye-language shows us none of this, as it stands. The American poet, Vachell Lindsay, attempted to overcome this difficulty, as far as his own poems were concerned, by printing in the margin broad directions as to the manner in which he wished certain passages to be rendered, but there is nothing exact about these directions and the interpreter has to use his imagination in translating them into terms of pace and intensity and quality of tone.

2. IN MUSIC

Eye language in music is in a different category. Music has always been consciously heard and consciously made. Its rhythms with their patterns of phrases and notes and varying degrees of pace and volume have always been appreciated to a degree

impossible to the spontaneous utterance of speech. In addition, the abstract use of sound frees music from the wealth of associations which enrich and, at the same time, limit its concrete use in words. A composer can indicate very clearly, if he wishes to do so, his exact intention with regard to phrasing, accent, pace and intensity. A study of modern sheet music offers proof of this.

In the case of the older composers, a rather interesting situation arises. The first printed music known appeared in 1502. Expression marks as such were first used by D. Mazzocchi, an Italian composer, in a book of madrigals published in 1640. These marks referred to intensity of tone and were the now familiar "p" (soft), "f" (loud), "cr" and < (*crescendo*, gradually getting louder), "dim" and > (*diminuendo*, gradually getting softer). Phrase marks as we understand them were not used, and bar-lines were just being introduced into music. In the first printed editions of the works of J. S. Bach and Beethoven and their contemporaries, there are hardly any expression marks at all. They wrote for the Clavichord, the ancestor of the modern piano. They could not foresee the developments soon to take place in the construction of this instrument, nor the immense possibilities of interpretative technique which these developments foreshadowed.

Consequently, their "eye-language" must be read against the background of their own times and not from the modern standpoint.

A case in point, quoted and explained by Professor Stewart Macpherson,¹ is the mark \sim used by Beethoven.

A good many editors of his works have translated these as phrase marks,² whereas they were probably intended to indicate legato as opposed to staccato

¹ *Studies in phrasing and form*. Chapter I.

² Some have tended to add marks of their own in their editions of the works of earlier composers, with the result that the superfluity of marks of all kinds is exceedingly confusing.

playing. Since the Clavichord had no pedal and the strings were plucked, not struck with hammers, the importance of such an indication is obvious. Again, no composer at this time allowed this mark (—) to extend beyond the bar in which it began. We are so used to bar-lines, nowadays, that we do not realize how immensely important they were when first introduced. With their introduction into musical composition came the measured metric structure, superseding the free melodic flow of plain song, and the way was opened for harmony as we understand it.

It is possible too, though there can be no proof of this, that, as was the case in speech, the ear was so much the dominant factor in music that the idea of marking musical sentences so that the eye could see them would never occur to composers. Gradually, however, the written forms of sounds assumed importance, and, both in speech and music, aids to the eye weakened the power of the ear to hear. It is comforting to realize that certain modern poets, at least, are doing their best to adjust the balance between ear and eye by dispensing with capital letters and punctuation. There is a good deal of truth in their implied suggestion that if their readers' ears cannot supply the right cadence, in the right place, after studying the written record, then they lack the receptive sensitivity necessary to students of poetry. A corollary to this suggestion is, of course, that there must be a logical thread of thought to be found! To obscure one's meaning may be clever. Puzzles have their place in our lives. But to confuse poetry with puzzles shows a lack of true artistic sensitivity.

Thus, as with written words, students must not expect too much from eye-language, even in music, neither must they depend on it. Marks of phrasing and expression are guides to the composer's intention, but they cannot give it in full.

It is interesting to notice that, while at first Italian

words and signs were universally known, it is now more usual for the composer to use, in addition, certain expressions from his native language. Couperin used French terms, Schumann (1810-1856) used German, and so up to our own days when Percy Grainger uses such terms as "with fists". There is both gain and loss in this variety of terminology—gain in that the composer can express his exact meaning best in his own language and loss in that interpreters need a very fair knowledge of each language in order to understand subtleties of expression. Nevertheless the original Italian terms are still the basic terms, particularly in regard to pace.

The following list gives terms of expression in general use. The German terms are approximated as nearly as possible to the Italian terms.

<i>Italian</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>English approximation</i>
		PACE
Lento. }		Very slow.
Adagio. }		Slow and leisurely.
Grave. }	Langsam.	Slow and grave.
Largo. }		Slow and broad.
Andante.		Moderately slow (a natural singing time in a quiet mood).
Andantino.		Slightly quicker than Andante.
Allegretto.	Bewegt.	Lively movement.
Allegro.		Very lively.
Vivace.	Lebhaft.	Quick and lively.
Presto.	Schnell.	Quick.
Prestissimo.		Very quick.

Variation within the general pace.

Rallentando. }		Slackening the pace (holding back).
Ritardando. }		
Meno Mosso.		Less movement, slower.
Allargando.		Broadening.
Accelerando. }		Accelerating the pace.
Stringendo. }		
Piu mosso.		More movement.
L'istesso Tempo.		In the same time.
A tempo.		In time.

<i>Italian</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>English approximation</i>
		MOOD
Dolce.	Zart.	Sweetly.
	Ruhig.	Calmly.
Amabile.		Amiably.
	Einfach.	Simply.
Cantabile.		In a singing style.
Sostenuto.		Sustained (associated with a broadening in pace).
Appassionata.		Passionately.
Con fuoco.		With fire.
Dolente.		Sadly.
Agitato.		In an agitated manner.
Calando.		Getting softer—and slower.
Morendo.		Dying away.
Perdendosi.		Losing itself.
		EMPHASIS
Ben Marcato.	Kraftig.	Well marked (usually applied to a phrase).
Sforzando (sfz). }		Increased accent upon a single note or chord.
Forzato (fz).		

Pace.

In music, pace (tempo) is frequently indicated by the metronome mark given at the beginning. As in speech, a suggestion of swiftness is frequently given by passages written in quavers, semiquavers and demi-semiquavers, though here again music is freer than speech and can move at a pace impossible to spoken words.

The pace of songs must be more or less that of the words to be sung. Long runs such as occur in opera or in oratorio are sung on one syllable, since it would be impossible to articulate a different syllable on each note of the run.

There are famous "patter songs" in light opera ¹

¹ Such as the Lord Chancellor's song in "Iolanthe" (Gilbert & Sullivan) and the Barber's song in "Figaro" (Mozart).

and in opera. It takes superb technique to sing these, particularly the latter, at the right musical pace and, at the same time, to miss no syllable in the words. The various terms used to indicate pace carry a suggestion of mood, and give a very real suggestion of the desired pace, even when the metronome mark is missing.

Sight Reading.

A clear understanding of eye language is essential to good sight reading. To read well at sight is perhaps more important in singing than in speaking, though it is necessary to both.

Training in it should begin early. It is not a tedious and difficult business properly approached. The eye must learn to realize the sweep of the phrase with its melodic rise and fall—must move through the melodic line recognizing intervals and translating them into sounds as it moves. It must be ahead of the voice. To move from note to note in singing is as useless as to read from word to word. It is here that the Sol-fa system is valuable because it suggests relationships between succeeding notes and strengthens the aural perception of them, but it must be applied to the musical staff in good time or printed music will remain difficult to read.

Here, perhaps, as well as anywhere, mention can be made of the singer's accompanist. He and the singer are partners and both are equally responsible for the interpretation of the song. They must be of one mind. The accompanist is an artist in his own right, not just an appendage to the piano. This is recognized in the case of professional accompanists, who are pianists of distinction, with an extensive knowledge of songs, due to their wide experience. Amongst amateurs, however, there is sometimes a lack of this partnership—either the singer takes his own way and leaves the

accompanist to guess at his intentions and follow as best he may, or the accompanist plays a solo, leaving the singer out of his calculations. It is essential that there should be plenty of rehearsal in order that the accompaniment and the singing should complement each other—as was the composer's intention. Audiences could raise the general level of accompanying considerably by recognizing a real partnership when they hear one, and not concentrating entirely on the singer, as they are inclined to do. Accompanying can be a thankless task—but the success of a song depends on it.

An accompanist should read easily and adequately at sight. There are occasions when rehearsal is not possible. Transposition from one key to another is sometimes necessary—in fact, the accompanist must be equipped at all points. He is entitled to the recognition usually reserved for the solo artist.

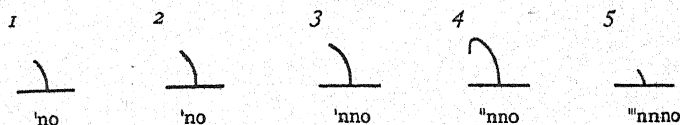
Emphasis.

Emphasis is increased prominence given to single words or notes or to part or the whole of a phrase.

The natural prominence of sounds, relative to each other, is due to their pitch, stress, length and volume. Emphasis results from the increased use of one or more of these attributes.

I. IN SPEECH

In conversational speech, which is not governed by æsthetic principles, it is usual to find all the emphatic devices used together. A simple example will serve to show this. Suppose that the answer to a question is "No", and that the question is repeated several times in an attempt to evoke the answer "Yes". With each repetition of "No" there is increasing emphasis, thus:



No. 2 shows increased range of pitch.

No. 3 shows a further increase in range of pitch, plus increased stress, plus a lengthening of "n".

No. 4 shows a still greater range of pitch with an audible slur up to the highest point.

No. 5 shows a sudden decrease in range with a still further increase in stress and length.

The first four utterances will carry an increase in volume, but the fifth, which is the most emphatic of all, reduces the use of vocal sound to a minimum and relies on great breath force and a very noticeable lengthening of "n". It has the effect of silencing the questioner. So emphatic is this utterance that its use in conversational speech is rare. In prepared speaking, however, particularly in dramatic situations, it is freely used.

Because an increase in volume and range of pitch are the more usual and obvious means of suggesting emphasis, speakers tend to forget that *decrease* of volume is also emphatic, and that the slight lengthening of the initial sound in a stressed syllable is an emphatic as well as a rhythmic device.

Consideration of these means to emphatic utterance shows that in æsthetic speech some discrimination in their use will prove necessary. The speaking of lyric verse affords the clearest illustration of this because in any such poem the mood is usually consistent. Such poetry is contemplative, needing a quiet sustained utterance. The voice must move within the limits of pitch naturally associated with the underlying mood.

Suddenly increased stress, volume or range shatter the atmosphere. Emphasis is suggested by the use of length, by sensitive grouping of the words, and by intensifying the level of utterance from within. True quietness results from an increase of spiritual energy which controls physical activity and reduces it to a minimum.

The more utterance is concerned with happenings external to the speaker, the more physically active he becomes, and gesture appears as a further emphatic device to reinforce words—even to replace them.

Pause.—The use of pause is a further means of emphasis. Speech is compact of sound and silence, as is music. Normally, we are unconscious of the part silence plays in forming our sound-patterns. We are more aware of sound and concentrate on it.

One of the early difficulties in speaking poetry is the necessity of hearing the silences which are part of the poet's sound-pattern, and of experiencing them as an integral part of rhythm.

An unexpected extension of silence has the effect of intensifying the expected sound, when it reaches our ears. In the same way, a silence unexpectedly following a sound causes us to retain the effect of the sound a little longer than usual and thus gives it greater significance.

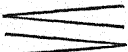
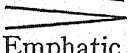
It is not wise to lay down strict rules for the use of pause. It is a tool, ready to the craftsman's hand. No rule as to its use can ensure that he uses it well. Pause, as an emphatic device, exists within rhythmic structure, and is conditioned by it. It is an æsthetic development of the fundamental and normal balance of sound with silence.

Emphasis is still another aspect of speech which does not appear in the printed form of words.

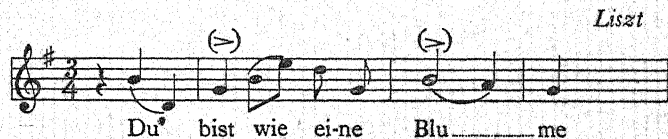
2. IN MUSIC

Printed music can suggest emphasis more clearly than printed words, but it can still only suggest. Emphasis in music is shown broadly by signs meaning increased stress on a note or notes, or by variation in intensity of tone (volume). There are, of course, subtleties of emphasis in touch and quality of tone which must be heard to be appreciated. They cannot adequately be described in visual form.

Varying intensity of tone is marked by the use of terms:

Piano	(p)
Pianissimo	(pp)
Forte	(f)
Fortissimo	(ff)
	Crescendo
	Diminuendo
Emphatic stress by > or ^	

In music, it is extremely necessary to realize the difference between metric and melodic stress. Metrically, the first beat of the bar carries the strongest accent, but melodically, the chief stress may fall on any beat. The metric beat should be felt but not necessarily emphasized. The following examples show clearly the unfortunate results of lifting metric stress to the emphatic level, regardless of melodic sense.



Pause.—There is no radical difference between the use of the pause in music and in speech.

Climax.—Climax has already been described as the culmination of the argument.¹

It may be heard as the highest note of a phrase, or the loudest, or an unexpectedly quiet note where increase rather than decrease in volume was anticipated. Whatever its nature, the important thing to realize is that it is not an isolated happening, unrelated to anything preceding or following it, but that its significance depends upon the structure of the whole argument. It is not important in itself but only in relation to the rest of the argument.

Every musical phrase contains a climax, and the argument proceeds from climax to climax to its conclusion. An excellent analogy is contour, as applied to hilly country. The highest peak in a range of mountains is approached by moving over a series of lesser heights. One does not leap to the peak from the plain.

Musical Forms.

Much has been written on musical forms, and reference is made in the bibliography to standard works on this subject. For general purposes the following types should be familiar to singers:

Binary.—The two-section form. It can be described as A.B. Examples are "Barbara Allen" and "The Cuckoo". (Folk tune.)

Ternary.—The three-section form. A very common form which can be described as A.B.A². Examples are "Charlie is my darling" and "Begone, dull Care".

Rondo.—The first section is repeated over and over again, each repetition being separated from the

¹ Page 61.

rest by short sections of melody and verse—A.B.A².C.A³., and so forth. Examples are *Sur le pont d'Avignon* and *The Skye Boat Song*.

Fugue.—A Fugue is an instrumental or vocal composition, contrapuntal in character. All the parts are of equal importance and of equal interest from the melodic point of view. The whole composition is developed from one short theme, which is called the subject of the fugue.

A good example is "And with his stripes we are healed" (*Messiah*, Handel). Many choruses from the vocal works of Bach and Handel are based on the fugal form.

CHAPTER IV

Material for Study and Performance

"Let us now praise famous men . . .
Such as found out musical tunes,
And recited verses in writing."

ECCLESIASTICUS.

THE singing voice has never been neglected by composers. Consequently, there is not only a wealth of material for singers to study, but an unbroken tradition in song. Opera combines drama with song. Oratorio links the platform with the age-old partnership between religion and song. The harmonic development of music, and the increase in the number of musical instruments, far from eliminating the human voice as an instrument, has enriched vocal music with part-songs of all kinds. Composers have never ceased to write for the singing voice, but it is doubtful whether writers have remembered the speaking voice to the same extent. There is no continuous tradition for the oral word comparable to that for the sung word, and to-day speakers are faced with the difficulty either of reviving an old tradition, or of beginning to build a new one.

In the days of the Greek and Roman Empires oratory ranked high among the arts, and choric speech had its place in drama. To-day, orators are few and until recently choric speech had disappeared from the stage. For many generations poetry has been presented to the public through the medium of print and this has meant that comparatively few people have cared for

it. Speaking poetry to the people and with the people has disappeared with the changing conditions of life.

Speech as an art survived on the stage and to some extent in the church, but it has gradually disappeared from the platform. Street corner oratory has never entirely disappeared, in spite of the checks placed from time to time on freedom of speech, but the fact that such oratory is usually strongly propagandist has not been beneficial to speech from the æsthetic point of view. Also, such speaking has had, as audience, a group of indiscriminate listeners—indiscriminate in the sense that they had gradually lost the delight in speaking and listening which belonged to their forefathers.

Since speech is so closely interwoven with human relationships and human personality it is inevitable that the differences in the social scale—the distinctions emphasized by birth and possessions—have played their part in preventing the full development of the æsthetic use of speech.

Now that these distinctions are gradually breaking down and the desire to remove them grows stronger year by year, conditions are ripe for a revival of interest in the spoken word. It seems, however, that speakers from the concert platform will have to realize that the material they choose to speak must be such as to appeal to an audience to whom listening is a new experience. Also, it will be necessary to remember that much of the literature they wish to speak may deal with an experience, and be couched in a language outside the comprehension of those who listen. In fact, if an oral tradition is to be built up again, its foundations should lie not in the concert hall but in such places where people gather together not only to listen but to speak, and where they speak and listen to words comparable in content and form to the old ballads and songs.

There are signs that this is happening. The various

Youth groups are making their own songs. The living newspaper is finding its way on to the stage. Even the documentary film may be regarded as a notable attempt to show how rich ordinary daily living is in material for the poet and the dramatist. When everyone is interested in using speech and listening to it, then the concert platform will find its right place in the life of the people. It will give to those who desire it the opportunity of hearing the finest literature spoken by the most gifted of speakers.

Spoken Poetry and Prose.

A golden rule for speakers is that they must match their manner to their matter. Written words may convey drama, philosophy, satire, humour; they may be purely descriptive or may deal with a series of incidents. In speaking such words it is essential that the speaker re-creates the situation imaginatively before he speaks. In ordinary conversation we vary our utterance in accordance with the situation in which we speak. In prepared speaking we must do the same. It cannot be too often stated that platform speech differs from colloquial speech only in quality—not in kind. Consequently observation of colloquial speech is an essential part of the study of material for performance.

Broadly speaking, all utterance of a subjective nature is characterized by a quiet, sustained tone, and a restricted use of pitch and intonation. Objective utterance, on the other hand, makes full and varied use of volume of tone, and range of pitch and intonation. Articulation itself varies, in much the same way as does the touch of a pianist. Sustained utterance asks for a "legato" articulation, smooth and flowing, while vigorous dramatic speech, in its crisp articulation, is suggestive of "staccato". Gesture frequently reinforces dramatic speech but is of doubtful value in lyric.

To know the history of the various poetic forms is interesting but not necessarily essential to a speaker. A sonnet has a quality peculiar to itself, whether it be Spenserian or Shakespearian. An audience will appreciate it, if it be well spoken, even if it is unaware of the term "sonnet".

Every poem, whatever its pattern, is a rhythmic unit. Its form and its content are inseparable. To apprehend the poem is essential, and no factual knowledge however great can substitute for this apprehension. Nevertheless, to explore as far as is possible the period in which a writer lived in order to deepen one's understanding of his writings is natural and wise.

Thus, it seems unnecessary, in a book designed for speakers, to enter upon discussions of written form. There are many authoritative books extant to which reference can be made.

Certain forms which are of interest to speakers because of the opportunities they afford for choral as well as solo speech are given.

Ballad Form.

A series of four-line verses. It is usual to find that the second and fourth lines finish with a silent beat. This characteristic has given rise to the misleading explanation that "ballad-measure" consists of lines of four beats and three beats alternately. All our old ballads are based on this form.

The king sits in Dunfermline town
Drinking the blood-red wine.
"Oh, where will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this new ship o' mine."¹

Sometimes the verse consists of solo and refrain lines alternately. In such cases the usual silent beat may

¹ Sir Patrick Spens.

be replaced by a spoken beat, as in this version of *Hynde Horn*:

In England there was a lordling born
 With a hey lillelu and a ho-lo-lan,
 And his name it was called young Hynde Horn.
 With a hey down and a hey diddle downie.

Or the usual pattern may be kept as in the *Lyke Wake Dirge*:

(refrain) This aye night, this aye night,
 Every night and all,
 (refrain) Fire and fleet and candle-light
 And Christ receive thy soul.

Ballads are dramatic narrative. As when they were first made and sung, so to-day many of them need soloist and chorus. The chorus may speak the refrain only, or act as narrators, leaving the direct speech to the soloist. Where there are several characters there can be several soloists.

Many of the finest ballads belong to the Border Country and present difficulties in that they are in the Scots tongue. It is possible to Anglicize the pronunciation to some extent, though, naturally, they then lose much of their intrinsic quality. Still, they offer to speakers an experience so valuable and so unique that they should be studied.

Broad Sheets.

These popular ballads were sold in the streets up to the eighteenth century. They were made to commemorate any topical event—murders or political incidents serving equally well for subject-matter.

In spite of various ordinances for their suppression—one made as early as 1643—they continued to appear. Presumably the law suppressed only those of an inflammatory or indecent character.

Refrain.

The use of refrain goes back to the days when song, dance and speech went hand in hand. It enabled the community to express, not necessarily the words or actions of the soloist, but the emotion evoked by them. As skill in the use of words developed, poetry and dance diverged, though Elizabethan lyrics show that poetry and song were still close partners. Eventually these three activities became separate arts, and the use of the refrain practically disappeared. Perhaps it may be said to reappear in the guise of repetition—repetition of a rhythmic word-pattern which adds nothing to the sense as in this verse:

Don't throw stones in Glasshouse Street,
In Glasshouse Street, in Glasshouse Street,
Don't throw stones in Glasshouse Street
Or you'll be beat;¹

or repetition of a phrase to increase significance as in the *Sands of Dee* (Kingsley):

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand.
As far as eye could see.

In speaking refrains it is necessary to realize that they must support and reinforce the solo lines but not outweigh them in importance. Here again is opportunity for the use of many voices in such poems as lend themselves to choric treatment and also make use of repetition in one form or another.

The first stanza of Dryden's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, with its cumulative repetition of

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began . . .

¹ "Nursery Rhymes of London Town", by Eleanor Farjeon,

asks for the accumulation of voices—a crescendo to the end of the stanza.

Sonnet.

A stanza of fourteen lines. Originally it was comprised of an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines), indicating two phases of one thought. Usually a sonnet is subjective in content. The strict discipline of the form lends itself to philosophic utterance. This disciplined economy in form and deeply contemplative nature of content make the sonnet one of the most difficult of poems to speak successfully.

Ode.

Originally, a poem written to be set to music. The term seems to be freely interpreted by English poets. The content again is subjective rather than objective. The length of an ode varies. Well-known examples are:

Ode to Death: John Donne.

Ode to the West Wind: Shelley.

Ode to the Nightingale: Keats.

Ode on the Intimations of Immortality: Wordsworth.

Ode for St. Cecilia's Day: Dryden.

Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington: Tennyson.

The Couplet.

Two lines of verse that rhyme with each other. A very simple form, best suited to verse of an objective nature and to humorous and satirical verse.

To the speaker, the couplet presents difficulties. It is so obvious a unit in form that it is not easy to avoid stressing form at the expense of content. The poet does not always confine his idea to one couplet, but

spreads it over two or three, so that while rhyme and metre suggest a regular repetition of a small simple pattern, sense suggests a weaving of several simple patterns into a larger and more complex one. The reconciliation of this apparent conflict between form and content is the speaker's task. When it is successfully accomplished, the simplicity of the couplet form, from being a difficulty, becomes a delight.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was the great master of couplet form. Since his day it has become gradually less popular. Here are the last lines of his *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*.

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame,
How loved, how honoured once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
Poets themselves must fall, like those they sung,
Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Even he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays;
Then from his closing eyes, thy form shall part
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The Muse forgot, and thou be loved no more!

Song.

In the year A.D. 1600 a small group of musical enthusiasts in Florence were concerned with trying to revive the Greek presentation of Drama. The Madrigal period was passing, but it was thought possible to incorporate polyphonic (madrigal) style of music into drama suitable for the stage. It was found, however, than an elaborate choral style could not be adapted sufficiently closely to dramatic situations. In consequence, the experiment was made of setting dialogue or

soliloquy to melodies closely following the inflexions of speech and accompanying the voice with supporting chords only.

Recitative.

Thus Recitative came into being and is defined as "Musical declamation, the rhythmic shape of which is entirely governed by the words to which it is set".

The idea of Recitative was adopted later for use in oratorio by Handel, Bach, Haydn, and others.

J. S. Bach

Now from the sixth hour there was dark-ness o-ver

all the land un - til the ninth hour.

Singers of Recitative must understand the use of the appoggiatura.¹

Ex. To be sung The appoggiatura takes half the value of the succeeding note unless that note be dotted, when the appoggiatura takes two-thirds of the value or one-third, according to the words sung.



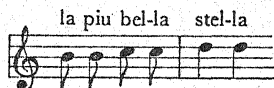
¹ It should not be confused with the acciaccatura, written thus and intended to be played or sung as quickly as possible before the succeeding note.

Ex. To be sung

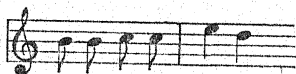


The point of this ornament is to avoid ending a phrase on two similar notes.

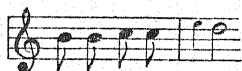
Thus



would be sung



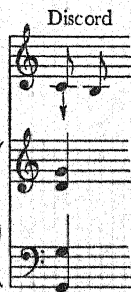
sometimes expressed by the appoggiatura.



Very many of the musical phrases to which the Italian words were set ended of necessity with two equal similar notes, the first of which needed a strong accentuation in order that sufficient importance should be given to the penultimate syllable.

English, also, has a strong tonic accent, and it will be found that recitatives written to English words benefit equally with those written to Italian from the increased vitality given to the syllable by the use of the appoggiatura. At this time certain harmonic limitations did not permit the writing of the accented passing note or discord caused by the use of the appoggiatura.

Also, it makes the transition from one note to another more graceful and less abrupt.



Sung

Oh cie - lo! a qual u mil sta to fa ta le

Sometimes the rising appoggiatura is very effective.

Che fa rò senz' Eu-ri - di - ce do vean

drò senz'il mio ben?

Sung

Tradition has kept the value of the appoggiatura to the quaver.

Some editors mark in all the appoggiaturas, and unfortunately a beautiful melody has sometimes been ruined by their inclusion where the composer had not the slightest intention of using them. One for example has been seen in the following phrase on the word "liveth".

Handel

I know that my Re-deem-er liv-eth

The traditional use of the *appoggiatura* in recitative and occasionally in aria remained in vogue up to the time of Beethoven, Rossini and Spohr.

The concentrated study of interpretation, so absolutely essential for the adequate rendering of recitative, must in time react on and influence the whole of a student's work.

One point for the accompanist to remember is that in recitative the chords, although written as though to be played as the final cadence with the last word or syllable of the singer, should be delayed until just after the singer has finished.

Generally speaking there are two kinds of recitative:

"*Recitativo Secco*", where the accompaniment merely serves to keep the singer in pitch and is the merest background. This was the original type as used by Handel.¹

"*Recitativo Stromentato*", which came into vogue when more attention was being given to the definite musical interest as against the dramatic interest. The accompaniment was written for the orchestra. In this type, the singer cannot have the same rhythmic freedom in his rendering.²

The Aria.

Literally an "Air". It was first employed by composers to give contrast to the preceding Recitative by having a more developed accompaniment and more regularly organized tunes. From the eighteenth century onwards, the term began to imply a vocal work which could be divided into three sections after the style of an extended Ternary Form—A, B, and then A repeated.³

¹ Example: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive".

² Example: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people" (*Messiah*).

³ "Prepare thyself, Zion" (*Christmas Oratorio*—J. S. Bach) is a good example of the "Aria" form.

In connexion with the Aria, various terms have come into use:

Aria tedesca.—An aria in the German style—a little less showy and more solid than the Italian.

Aria fugata.—With fugal accompaniment. "But haste" in Handel's *Semele* is an example.

Aria all'unisons.—Accompaniment in unison or octaves with the voice part: "The people that walked in darkness" (*The Messiah*—Handel).

Aria di bravura or *Aria d'agilita*: "Rejoice Greatly" (Handel).

Aria parlante.—Declamatory, very similar to recitativo stromentato: "Comfort ye" (Handel).

Aria cantabile.—Slow, smooth and pathetic, offering opportunity for embellishment: *Che Faro senza Euridice* (Gluck).

Oratorio.

The early beginnings of oratorio are found in the Mysteries, Miracle Plays, and Moralities which were known throughout Europe. In 1556, in Rome, Philip Neri¹ began to hold popular services designed to attract and hold the attention of youth. He introduced religious plays and between the acts interpolated addresses. He held these services not in the parish church but in an oratory. He later founded the Order of the Congregation of the Oratory, and this Order became well known for its musical traditions. The term Oratorio, in the musical sense, is always spoken of as originating in the oratory above mentioned in 1600, since it was here that music was gradually introduced into the Miracle Plays.

However, both oratorio and opera developed from the early attempts of the Florentine band to introduce a method of direct and dramatic vocal statement in

¹ 1515-95, afterwards canonized and known as Saint Philip Neri.

music. Cavalieri, composer of the first oratorio, *The Representation of Soul and Body*, was one of the group of musicians from Florence, and this oratorio looks much the same as Peri's opera *Euridice*. All the early Mystery Plays had some music as well as the use of the natural speaking voice. The oratorio had nothing spoken, but it was to be given with dresses and action and a hidden orchestra. Towards the middle of the century the actual dramatic representation began to decline.

To-day an oratorio is understood to be an extended setting of a religious libretto for chorus, orchestra and vocal soloists, and for either concert or church performance. It is performed without scenery, costume or action. Some works have been called "oratorios" even when the libretti were not religious on the grounds that they were written on the general lines of an oratorio, and they could not be called "operas" because they were not intended for stage performance.¹ Broadly speaking, a Mass, a Passion, a setting of the Stabat Mater, are all oratorios.

Passion Music.

In Germany many composers turned their attention to what was termed Passion Music. As far back as the fourth century it had been the custom to read in Church in the Latin tongue in a more or less dramatic fashion, the story of the Passion of Christ. By the eighth century this custom had developed in the following way: a priest read the story of the Passion from one of the Gospels except for the words of Christ, which he gave out to a traditional plain-song. By the twelfth century, three of the clergy took part—a tenor as narrator, a bass as Christ, an alto as the crowd. Then followed the progress in musical composition, the

¹ Handel's *Semele* is an example of this.

adoption of the language of the people as the results of the Reformation in Germany and the final culminating point of the Passion Music in the works of J. S. Bach. Bach wrote five settings of the Passion including one according to each Gospel, but only the *St. Matthew* and the *St. John Passion* are heard to-day. The *St. Matthew Passion* is the best known and is the greatest and the most devotional work of its kind ever written. The narrator is a tenor and here may be found the beautiful use of recitative secco. It is written to be accompanied on the harpsichord. The words of Jesus are given to a bass singer with an invariable accompaniment of strings only, to distinguish them from those of any other character. There are double choruses, a double orchestra, and accompaniment for the organ.

Chorales are interspersed as reflexion on the particular events of the story. It is uncertain whether these were intended to be sung by, or merely to, the congregation. At quite a recent date copies with the vocal line or melody were distributed to the people and certain chorales were sung by them as well as by the choir, and it is certain that nothing was lost by this procedure. The general opinion seems to have been that the performance made a very special and intimate appeal.

Well-known Oratorios and their Composers.

The Messiah: Handel.

Saul: Handel.

Israel in Egypt (double choruses): Handel.

Judas Maccabæus: Handel.

Acis and Galatea: Handel.

The Creation: Haydn.

The Last Judgement: Spohr.

Elijah: Mendelssohn.

St. Ludmila: Dvořák.

The Beatitudes: César Franck.

Judith: Parry.

The Apostles: Elgar.

The Dream of Gerontius: Elgar.

The Kingdom: Elgar.

Belshazzar's Feast: Walton.

Opera.

The first opera is generally considered to be Peri's *Euridice*, which appeared in 1600. It marks the beginning of the movement away from counterpoint towards harmony and owes much to the composers in Florence, who first used Recitative. The subject of opera is such a wide one that it is impossible to speak of its great development, and of all the composers of opera, in a small space. Briefly, by the end of the seventeenth century, the triumph of the solo singer was such that the popular favourites were completely spoilt and opera itself began to degenerate into something like a costume concert. Then followed the reforms of Gluck, who wanted poetry and dramatic truths expressed on the stage and less of the pandering to singers. Although trained in Italy he began to write for Paris, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1774) stands out as being the first opera which he wrote originally in the French language, and one in which his new principles are really felt. He insisted that:

1. More importance should be given to the overture which was to prepare the audience for the drama to follow.

2. That variety should be expressed in the orchestration to give the requisite degree of interest and passion to the words.

3. That the dramatic element and the poetry should be considered first, and that the music should not take away from the effect by any unnecessary ornaments.

Glück was a German, and he prepared the way for Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and, later, Wagner and Strauss.

Wagner cast aside the rigid styles of recitative and aria, and instead of the division of a vocal piece into balanced sections he substituted a system of organic development out of short germinal fragments or motifs ("leading motifs"—Leitmotif). Each aptly characterizes the situation or person with whom it is first associated, and thus it was possible to bring particular thoughts and reminiscences to the memory of the audience at any moment. At the same time he had increased enormously the number and variety of his orchestral forces and discovered abler ways of using them for the dramatic purpose of the moment.¹



The "love potion" motif in *Tristan und Isolde*

Up to this time Grand Opera had made no use of spoken dialogue. In France the Opera Comique was popular—not Comic Opera as we now know it, but opera in which the spoken voice is used as in Bizet's *Carmen*, the subject of which is really tragic.

In England there was a protest against all opera being in Italian, and as a result there appeared the first of the Ballad Operas, *The Beggar's Opera*.² Out of this grew the more pretentious type known as English Opera, which implies a musical setting with an admixture of spoken dialogue and the subject-matter

¹ Wagner's Operas: *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tristan*, *Tannhäuser*, *Meistersinger*, *Lohengrin*, *Parsifal*, *Rienzi* and *Ring of the Nibelung*.

² John Gay.

light in character. Bishop, Balfe, Wallace and Benedict are well-known composers of this type of opera.¹ Later still appeared the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which retain their popularity.

Lieder.

A German word meaning "songs", but with a particular rather than a general application, which came into use in the time of Schubert, 1797-1828. It marks the advance made in the style of solo song. The Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century had a great effect on the evolution of song. Composers drew upon the poetry of writers such as Scott, Heine and Goethe, and the lyrical poems of Goethe in particular were a source of inspiration to the composer of this period.

The pianoforte had gradually taken the place of the less sensitive harpsichord, and, after nearly a century of development, was now very responsive in touch and could interpret the poetic requirements of composers such as Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn.

In Purcell's day,² accompaniments to song were written for figured bass, and the chords could be filled in only by one who had a knowledge of harmony.

Purcell

Jea-lou-sy that poi - sons pas-sion, And des-pair that dies for love

modern notation
f

From Purcell's *Fairest Isle* (quoted from *Orpheus Britannicus*)

¹ *The Bohemian Girl*—Balfe. *Maritana*—Wallace. *The Lily of Killarney*—Benedict.

² 1658 or 9 to 1695.

Schubert's songs show a great variety in accompaniment, ranging from the simple *Hark! hark! the Lark!* to the much more difficult *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. Thus, the term "Lied" properly belongs to songs of the type written at this period—songs in which the music closely reflects the spirit of the poems, and in which the figured bass is discarded for the careful collaboration of the harmonic aspect of accompaniment as an essential part of the composition.¹

Song Cycle.

The song cycle was established at this period. The composer brought together the lyrics of one poet,² or lyrics by various poets which were similar in thought and feeling. Notable examples of the Lied period are:

To the distant beloved (An die ferne geliebte). Beethoven, 1816.

The beautiful Maid of the Mill (Die Schöne Müllerin). Schubert, 1823.

Winter Journey (Winterreise). Schubert, 1823.

A Poet's Love (Wichterliebe). Schumann, 1844.

Woman's Love and Life (Frauenliebe und leben). Schumann, 1843.

Lyric.

A term applied to poetry of the simpler type of personal expression which lends itself to—and readily suggests—treatment as song. It is used for songs interpolated in such musical plays as *San Toy*, *Lilac Time*, and so forth. It is used, also, for the poems of sentimental songs.

¹ Among composers of Lieder may be mentioned Franz, Brahms, Wolf, Parry and Elgar.

² These lyrics may originally have been intended to form a series—but such is not always the case.

Ballad.

The ballad is a communal product. It expresses the ideas and reflects the taste and feelings not of the individual but of the community. Probably, in early days, it was danced as well as sung. As dance and song gradually diverged the Ballad became a song with solo and refrain—the latter sung by the audience. To-day the audience is dispossessed and the soloist sings both narrative and refrain. Since the early ballads were never written down, they are full of devices for relieving the strain on the memory of the Singer. There are well-worn phrases constantly repeated, and questions asked and answered in words as nearly as possible alike. There is economy of invention and a notable absence of padding. The true ballad is extremely vivid and direct in style and has a strong compelling rhythm. So deeply ingrained in the lives of the people was ballad form that the Church adopted it and used it as the foundation of antiphonal singing. The common metre of many hymn tunes probably derives from the ballad.

*Madrigal, Glee, and Part Song**The Madrigal.*

The word is found as the title of a musical composition in Italy dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. It then implied a secular unaccompanied vocal composition for two or three voices with ingenious imitations between the voices. Unlike most of the choral music of this period, the madrigal was free composition, that is, it was not a mere addition of free parts to a fixed part, but was free in every part. About the fourteenth century the term seems for a time to have dropped out of musical use, and to have been applied to that type of lyrical poetry, of a

pastoral or idyllic, or amorous character, which had formed the subject of the musical settings.

The title again reasserted itself in the musical world in the sixteenth century, when the Flemish composers, of whom there were many in Italy,¹ and the Italian composers wrote secular unaccompanied choral compositions. From Italy this type of composition travelled to England where, in 1588 and 1597, Nicholas Yonge published *Musica Transalpina* ("Music from across the Alps"), a collection of Italian madrigals with the words translated into English. Yonge was a singing man of St. Paul's Cathedral, and had a house not very far away where he used to gather "a great number of Gentlemen and Merchants of good accompt (as well of this realme as of foreine nations) . . . for the exercise of music daily". From this time the English composers began to be active in writing madrigals, and they quickly equalled their Flemish and Italian models.

Except for the frequent use of a lighter touch, these madrigals do not differ greatly from the Church music² of the same period. Both are for unaccompanied voices, but the madrigals were intended for only one voice to a part. The number of parts written for varies from two to six or more.

The poems set are often either pastoral or amatory, or both, and they abound in classical allusions, and are often fanciful. The setting of the notes to the words has almost invariably been done with great skill; not only are changes of mood closely reflected, but definite point is given to every expression of the poet so far as is possible. Dr. E. H. Fellowes has issued thirty-six volumes of English madrigals, so that these songs are now available to the general public.

Despite the fact that the music of the madrigals was so closely allied to the words, it was sometimes used

¹ They were the chief Church musicians there at that period.

² The Continental motets and English anthems.

purely as instrumental music, and we find collections with this inscription "Apt for Voyces or Vyols".

In England a famous collection of madrigals appeared in *The Triumphs of Oriana*, which contained twenty-nine madrigals in praise of Queen Elizabeth, under the editorship of Thomas Morley. About ten years before, there had appeared in Venice a collection of twenty-nine madrigals, also by twenty-nine different composers, called *Il Trionfo di Dori*—Palestrina and all the finest Italian composers of the day contributed to this. Who Dori was is now unknown—most probably merely an impersonation of Italian womanhood. The idea was taken up in England and the name "Oriana" was substituted for "Dori", so the refrain ends each madrigal "Long live fair Oriana". However, dated 1601 and published 1603, it appeared after the Queen's death. The best known of these are *As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending* (Weelkes), *Flora gave me fairest flowers* (John Wilbye).

Here is a list of madrigals suitable for a choir who are just beginning to sing madrigals:

Stainer & Bell

Canzonet:

- Sweet nymph, come to thy lover.* Morley. 2 part.
- When, lo, by break of morning.* Morley. 2 part.
- Love learns by laughing.* Morley. 3 part.
- Though Philomela lost her love.* Morley. 3 part.
- O sleep, fond fancy.* Morley. 3 part.

Madrigal air:

- How merrily we live.* Michael Este. 3 part.

Canzonet:

- Sit still and stir not.* William Holborne. 3 part.

Novello

Madrigal:

- Since first I saw your face.* Thomas Ford. 4 part.
- Flora gave me fairest flowers.* John Wilbye. 4 part.

Come again, sweet love. John Dowland. 4 part.

O sleep, fond fancy. John Bennet. 4 part.

Now is the gentle season. Thomas Morley. 4 part.

The Silver Swan. Orlando Gibbons. 5 part.

To shorten winter's sadness. Thomas Weelkes. 5 part.

Ballett:

Sing we and chant it. Thomas Morley. 5 part.

Madrigal:

I thought that love had been a boy. W. Byrd. 5 part.

The Ayre.

The Ayre differs from the Madrigal in that it repeats the music for the different verses of the poem. It is less contrapuntal and more like a soprano solo with accompanying vocal or instrumental parts.

*The Ballett.*¹

The Ballett resembles the Ayre in that it is verse-repeating, but it has a dance-like lilt and a fa-la-la refrain.²

The Madrigal declined with the monodic style. It was followed by Recitative, Opera and Oratorio.

Glee.

This form is purely English and was popular from about 1750 to 1830. Its chief characteristic is that the highest part is written for adult male altos, singing in that falsetto which has never been much cultivated elsewhere than in Britain.³

¹ Pronounced bal-let. It must not be confused with the dance form pronounced Bal-lay.

² "Now is the month of Maying", Morley.

³ Examples are:

"Glorious Apollo", Webbe.

"Awake Æolian Lyre", Dan.

"From Oberon", Steven.

Part Song.

The Part-song differs from the Glee in that it may be written for mixed, for male, or for female voices. It represents the period when women took part in choral performances, and when choral societies were formed. It is intended to be sung by many voices to each part. It resembled the Ayre in style, and in the repetition usually of the same music to each verse. It has always been popular in England and, like the glee and the round, can be considered as a specially British type of musical enjoyment. Parry and Stanford did notable work in part-song composition. Elgar raised its musical qualities even higher and recent years have seen a great outpouring of part-songs.

CHAPTER V

Speaking and Singing in Church

"Speech is the image of life."—DEMOCRITUS.

CHURCH services offer opportunities in speech and song unparalleled in any other field open to speakers and singers. The communal nature of a service is as traditional as its reliance on oral communication. Giving as well as receiving is implicit in worship. The strength of organized religion does not depend fundamentally upon buildings or upon any particular order of service but upon the gathering together of a number of people to listen to—and to utter—those beliefs and aspirations which they share. There is nothing more peculiar about gathering together in a church than in a concert hall or in a mass meeting in Trafalgar Square. It is natural—inevitable—that such gatherings take place. What seems unnatural is the lack of vitality which many church congregations show in the singing and speaking—even in the listening—which is their contribution to the service in which they are engaged. Possibly the inarticulateness which has gradually crept over us all has affected even our worship, and there has been no general effort to revive interest in the vital importance to worship of a creative use of speech and song.

The Congregation.

It is possible that the religious tolerance found in this country has caused modern congregations to forget

at what cost the liberty to worship as they choose has been won. The order of service, the well-known hymns, by their very familiarity, have become a matter for unthinking acceptance. If congregations were forbidden to sing in church, there would be an outcry and an immediate rebellion, yet congregational singing is frequently so poor and spiritless that it is hard to believe that the people in the pews appreciate the opportunity and responsibility that public worship confers upon those who take part in it.

The history of hymn-writing is a history of the gradual development of the church and of the struggle for freedom of conscience in religious matters. It is, also, a history of the development of music—of the gradually changing lives of the people. Whenever a hymn is sung, echoes of the living past are heard, but how many ears in the pews are alive to them?

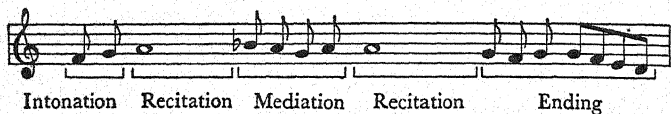
Hymns.

Congregations should be encouraged to study their hymn-books, and to know something at least of their origin. It is not fitting that such knowledge should be confined to the organist and to the choir. There are many authoritative books on the origin and development of hymn-writing, and here it is not possible to do more than state certain salient facts. These are mentioned in the hope that a survey, however brief, of the richness of our heritage may stimulate those who care for public worship—and even some who think of it as a convention—to embark on a study of hymns and revive the interest of congregations in them.

To us a hymn is verse set to music, but the earliest hymns were the Hebrew psalms. Hilary of Poitiers, who died in A.D. 368, was the first to compose hymns in verse. This innovation led to such a development in hymn melodies that it was found that the tunefulness of the melody tended to obscure the meaning of the

words. Consequently, in the fourth century, St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, chose from the old Greek melodies a set of scales or modes which became the basis of the official church music known as Plain-song.

Here is an example¹ of a simple psalmodic plain-song. This is in the Dorian mode or Tone I as it was termed.



The term "plain" may be taken in the literal sense of "unadorned". The idea developed probably from the natural tendency of a reader or speaker, especially in a large building, to utter his words on one note with some dropping of the voice at the ends of sentences or verses. The rhythm is the free rhythm of speech. It is, therefore, a prose rhythm which arises from the unmetrical character of the words to be recited—psalms, prayers, and the like.

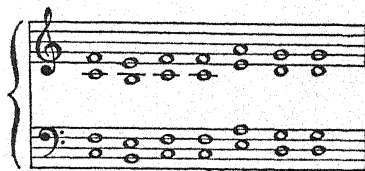
Some of the early Gregorian chants—so called because they were adopted and used by Pope Gregory of Rome at the end of the sixth century—are still in use, but to get the effect they must be sung in unison with no particular attempt at time in the measured sense, and so allowing the words to govern the rhythm of the melody. There should be no accompaniment.

The language for all worship in western Europe was Latin, and so this restricted the intelligent worship to those who were among the cathedral clergy or among the monks. When song was practised several times a day experiments were inevitable to escape monotony. One discovery made was that the air could be sung an octave above, and later that an added part could be

¹ Quoted from the "Oxford Companion to Music", Percy Scholes.

sung a fourth or a fifth below. This practice, called "organum", was a vocal convenience, a melody that suits tenors being, when transposed a fourth or fifth below, comfortable for basses, and these two parts, when transposed an octave higher, being comfortable for sopranos and altos.

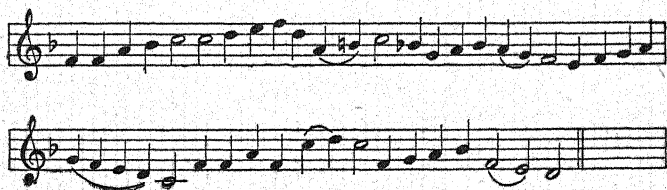
Later still, the twelfth century saw the development of Descant. It was not used quite in the same way as it is to-day, and was often carried out extemporaneously. Here



one or more accompanying voices move in a free way against the steadier plain-song. The art of harmony was then on the way to great expansion, and the monastic music became very elaborate.

It is to the Reformation that we owe the hymn as we understand it. The end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth saw the Reformation in Bohemia, which was followed in the sixteenth century by the Reformation in Germany, France and England. At this time, too, came the invention of printing, which made the publication of books possible. John Huss wrote many hymns, and in 1504 the Moravian Brothers issued a book of 400 hymns. In a shortened form one of their chorales is in use to-day—*Ravenshaw*, sung to the words "Lord, thy word abideth".

Here is the older form of this chorale.



The first Luther hymn-book appeared in 1524. To Luther we owe the hymn *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* (*A safe stronghold our God is still*). This has been described as "the greatest hymn of the greatest period of German history".

Eventually, in England, English was adopted as the language of public worship. A book of Common Prayer was produced, and Byrd, Tallis, and other English composers wrote settings for the canticles. Hymn-writing developed later, as hymns were not included in this book.

In May, 1644, Parliament ordered the removal of all organs from churches and chapels, and the new Directory for Worship enjoined the general singing of the metrical psalms. Thus the great heritage of song was encouraged.

Amongst the Dissenters, the writing and singing of hymns made steady progress, though the people seem to have preferred the old tunes. This is not to be wondered at, since words and tune had a significance in those days which we, removed by so many years from the struggle for freedom of conscience, may scarcely appreciate.

In 1707 appeared Dr. Watt's hymn-book, the first of the modern type. In 1737, in Georgia, came John Wesley's first publication. *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, was published in 1861 and retained its popularity for many years. The *English Hymnal* appeared in 1906, containing traditional melodies, many of them of English origin, and also French, Swiss and German melodies, restored to their original rhythm. Later collections are *Songs of Praise* and the Revised edition of the *Church Hymnary* used in the Presbyterian Church.

Playing of Hymns.

A few common faults in hymn-playing are constantly heard, whether the hymns are accompanied on the organ or the piano.

An erratic speed is sometimes suggested. This can easily be remedied by singing the hymn whilst playing so that the phrase—generally one line—can be conveniently sung in one breath. The interval of time between the verses is frequently too long or too short. In a large church it is often difficult to judge the speed for the congregation, especially if the organ is far away in a corner, because the organist must always be prepared to play slightly before the congregation. On this point advice can easily be given by some musical friend sitting in the church. In playing a hymn over the speed at which it is to be sung should be indicated. Frequently the first phrase is played so quietly or so slowly that all rhythmic sense is lost, with the result that the singing of the first verse is chaotic. A slight lingering on the first chord of the first verse with full tone will encourage the congregation to start and, the speed being previously set, the hymn will then be sung rhythmically with no further halts at the beginning of any of the following verses.

The habit of playing one hand after the other, so that a chord of four-part harmony is not heard together, is very distressing to the ear. If the accompanist is not conscious of the weakness, he must be told to listen most carefully to the unfortunate effect produced. This habit is quite easily remedied as soon as it is realized.

The importance of bass notes is not always grasped by pianists. Organists are more likely to escape this fault because they are endeavouring to play the right pedals even if they do not always succeed. Pianists have to manipulate the chording sometimes for the sake of the stretch, and the amateur will frequently leave the bass notes in thin air whilst endeavouring to get in the tenor part. Often this fault occurs through a lack of harmonic knowledge and therefore the tune, or the soprano line, is all-important, while the other three parts—alto, tenor, and bass—receive too little

consideration. Clear chording is absolutely essential for good effect.

A lack of phrasing is frequently apparent. Although, with the exception of plain-song tunes, our hymns are written according to metrical beats with bar-lines, the words do require a rhythmical phrasing, and this is often hindered by the stubborn manner in which a pianist or organist plays chord after chord of minim length with no progression towards a cadence.

The question of playing over only the first line of a hymn tune needs consideration. It can be argued that to play the complete tune would take too long, and that since it is familiar to the congregation, they do not wish to hear it. On the other hand, if hymns are an important part of the service, they should be treated with respect and given their due place. Hymn tunes can be played in such a way that the desire of the congregation to sing receives a stimulus or a check.

Here is a list of hymn tunes selected from the *English Hymnal* and *Songs of Praise*, to illustrate the traditional interest of a good hymn-book:

EARLY LATIN HYMNS.

- Sung to the *Proper Sarum Melody*.¹ "Creator of the starry height" (*Conditor alme siderum*).
 "Now my tongue the mystery telling" (*Pange lingua*).
 "Before the ending of the day" (*Te lucis ante terminum*).
 "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire" (*Veni, Creator Spiritus*).

ENGLISH TRADITIONAL TUNES.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Kingsfold.</i> | E.H. 574. | "I heard the voice of Jesus say." |
| <i>King's Lynn.</i> | E.H. 562. | "O God of Earth." |
| <i>St. Columba.</i> | E.H. 490. | "The King of Love my Shepherd is." |
| <i>Monk's Gate.</i> | E.H. 402. | "He who would valiant be." |
| <i>Coleshill.</i> | C.H. 31. | "God moves in a mysterious way." |

¹ The plain-song as sung in the Old Sarum diocese.

ENGLISH TRADITIONAL TUNES (*continued*).

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|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| | S. of P. | "The Lord will come and not be slow." |
| | 658. | |
| Capel. Carol
Melody. | E.H. 488. | "The church of God a kingdom is." |
| A FRENCH TUNE. | | |
| Picardy. | E.H. 318. | "Let all mortal flesh keep silence." |
| A SWISS TUNE. | | |
| Solothum. | E.H. 243. | "Around the throne of God, a band." |
| WELSH TUNES. | | |
| Aberystwyth | S. of P. | "Jesu, Lover of my soul." |
| | 542. | |
| Hyfrydol. | E.H. 563. | "Once to every man and nation." |
| Ebenezer. | E.H. 108. | "Who is this with garments gay." |
| St. Dennis. | E.H. 407. | "Immortal, Invisible, God only wise." |
| AN IRISH TUNE. | | |
| St. Patrick's
Breastplate. | E.H. 212. | "I bind unto myself to-day
The strong name of the Trinity." |

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HYMNS.

- (Words.) "O for a thousand tongues to sing." Charles Wesley.
 "Jesu, Lover of my soul". Charles Wesley.
 "Rock of Ages." Toplady.
 "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." Newton.
 "O God, our help in ages past." Watts.
 "When I survey the wondrous cross." Watts.
 "Hark the glad sound, the Saviour comes." Doddridge.
 "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord." Cowper.
 "O for a closer walk with God." Cowper.
- (Tunes.) *Gopsal* (sung to "Rejoice, the Lord is King"). Handel.
St. Anne (sung to "O God our help"). Croft.
Hanover (sung to "O worship the King"). Croft.
Rockingham (an adaptation of an earlier tune) (sung to "When I survey the wondrous cross"). Miller.

MODERN ENGLISH TUNES.

Sine Nomine. E.H. 641 (sung to "For all the saints").
Vaughan Williams.

Marching. S. of P. 678 (sung to "Through the night of
doubt and sorrow"). Martin Shaw.

St. Botolph. S. of P. 527 (sung to "How sweet the name of
Jesus sounds"). Gordon Slater.

Jerusalem. S. of P. 446 ("And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green"). C. Hubert H.
Parry.

Thaxted. S. of P. 319 (sung to "I vow to thee my country").
Gustav Holst.

Down Ampney. E.H. 152 (sung to "Come down, O Love
divine"). R. Vaughan Williams.

Wolvercote. C.H. 508 (sung to "O Jesus I have promised").
W. H. Ferguson.

Ladywell. C.H. 139 (sung to "All hail the power of Jesus'
Name"). W. H. Ferguson.

Cranham. E.H. 25 (sung to "In the bleak mid-winter").
Gustav Holst.

Carols.

Carols occupy a special place in Church music and, again, it is a pity that their history is not better known to the general public.

The early Carols were danced as well as sung, and in this show an interesting parallel to the Ballad. Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, was known as "Choir-gaur", the Giants' Dance or Carol—probably from the rings of stones resembling dancers. There is a reference to it in the Harding Chronicles.¹

This combined singing and dancing existed among pre-Christian peoples from time immemorial, and there seems to be no doubt that it found its way into the Christian Church. Though forbidden in churches in 589 and again in 1209 it persisted until comparatively recent times. Until the seventeenth century, the apprentices were accustomed to dance in York Minster on Shrove Tuesday.

¹ "Within the Giants' Carole, they so hight, the Stone-hengles that now so named been."

Many carols are of pagan origin and are based on ancient legends. The feast of Yule is pre-Christian, and carols associated with its observance were taken over by the Church and adapted to suit the Christian festival of Christmas. In this the Church showed its wisdom, for it would not have been possible to eradicate these carols with their strong oral and religious tradition.

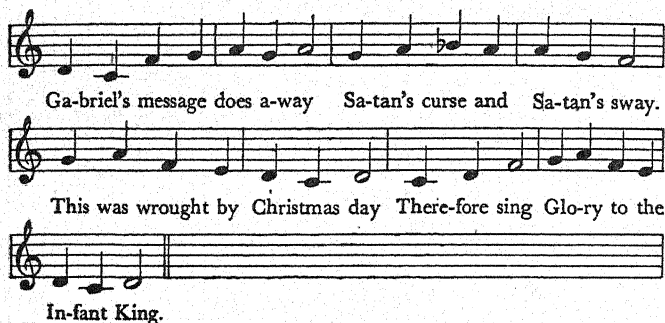
The lovely *Cherry Tree* carol is founded on one of the oldest of legends, and the story is found in the Coventry Mystery Plays of the fifteenth century. The poem itself is probably eighteenth-century work. The carols of holly and ivy belong to Yule, as does the custom of decorating the house with evergreen at Christmas. These evergreens were a symbol of shelter during the hard cold months offered to those faery people who lived in trees and woods, and whose friendship was necessary to the well-being of the household. About the beginning of the eighteenth century, the holly and its berries were associated with St. Mary and the Holy Child.

The first Carol was sung by angels to those shepherds of long ago; so far as we know the first carol sung by men was heard in Grecia, near Assisi. Here St. Francis made the first Christmas crèche or crib, and the brethren of his community sang Christmas hymns in honour of the birth of the Saviour of the World. St. Francis used this simple dramatic representation to instruct his people in the truths of Christianity. From this simple origin sprang the Christian Carol and the Christmas Mystery Plays.

It was during the fifteenth century that the popularity of Miracle and Mystery Plays was at its height, and our earliest carols date from this period. At first the carols were sung as *Intermezzi* between the scenes of the play. Later the music became part of the play and was performed by the singers and players on the stage. When the enthusiasm of the audience was very great, they left the stage in procession and, joined by the audience,

went from street to street. From this custom to that of separating the carols from the plays was an easy step.

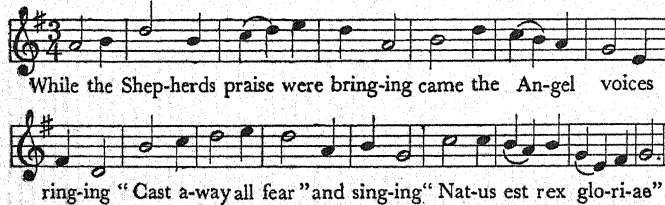
The *Angel Gabriel* carol, written in the Dorian mode:



Ga-briel's message does a-way Sa-tan's curse and Sa-tan's sway.
This was wrought by Christmas day There-fore sing Glo-ry to the
In-fant King.

A German "Liedlein"

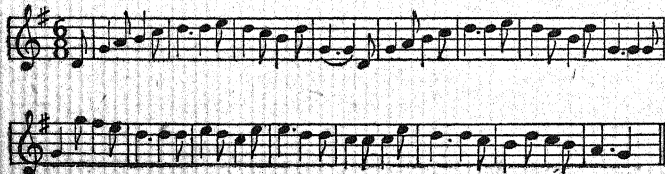
14th Century



While the Shep-herds praise were bring-ing came the An-gel voices
ring-ing "Cast a-way all fear" and sing-ing "Nat-us est rex glo-ri-ae"

Noël de Cœur

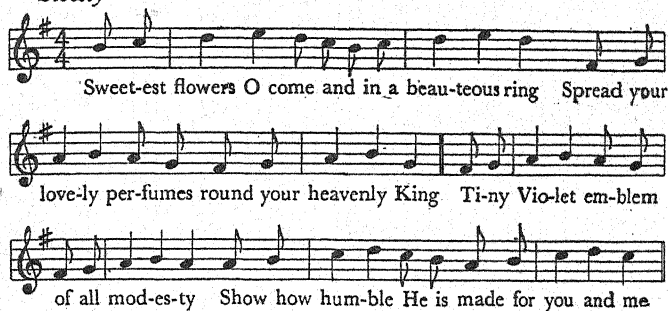
16th Century



Popular French dancing song sung to the carol *Tous les bourgeois de Chartres*.

The Carol of the Flowers

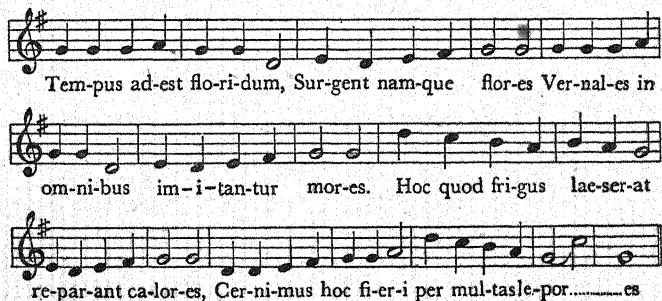
Slowly



Sweet-est flowers O come and in a beau-teous ring Spread your
love-ly per-fumes round your heavenly King Ti-ny Vio-let em-blem
of all mod-es-ty Show how hum-ble He is made for you and me

This is a Bas-Quercy carol, and although the melody is written in a major mode and sounds rather modern, it is really old, being founded upon another version of the same tune which was in use in the seventeenth century.

In the *Prae Cantiones*, printed in Sweden in 1582, is an interesting Latin specimen of an old spring song, *Tempus adest floridum*, with a good tune which Dr. Neale adapted to his own words *Good King Wenceslas*. Few people realize that this melody comes from a spring song of the thirteenth century.



Tem-pus ad-est flo-ri-dum, Sur-gent nam-que flor-es Ver-nal-es in
om-ni-bus im-i-tan-tur mor-es. Hoc quod fri-gus lac-ser-at
re-par-ant ca-lor-es, Cer-ni-mus hoc fi-cr-i per mul-tas-le-por-.....es

The pastoral element enters into some carols, perhaps especially in France, and the association with shepherd life was long kept in certain places. In Naples, shepherds came down from the hills at Christmas and played in the streets before the figures of the Virgin and Child. Their music was of the bagpipe type, which Handel has preserved in the *Pastoral Symphony* of the *Messiah*. His original score admits the source of the tune.

The oldest printed Christmas Carol is the *Boar's Head Carol*. It was printed in a collection by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521, and is still sung on Christmas Day at Queen's College, Oxford, when the traditional dish is carried in.

Other traditional carols are:

Fifteenth century (probably).

I saw three ships come sailing in.

The Holy Well.

The Seven Joys of Mary.

Fifteenth century.

The Golden Carol of Gaspar.

Melchior and Balthazar (Epiphany).

The Coventry Carol (Lullaby).

Welcome Yule.

In the seventeenth century the Puritan disapproval of keeping religious feasts extended to Christmas celebrations, including the singing of carols.

After the Restoration in 1660, the old customs were revived, and in the late nineteenth century the custom of singing carols out of doors and going from house to house was well established. Unfortunately this custom gradually degenerated into an excuse for begging, and children came as early as November, bawling a few lines from a popular carol, and then knocking on the door for money. The twentieth century has shown a

desire for better Christmas music and more of the traditional carols are being revived.

Every opportunity should be taken by the churches to interest their congregations in hymns and hymn singing. Lectures on the origin and history of hymns and of their tunes should be given and, possibly, more attention paid to the selection of the hymns to be sung week by week at the services. Half an hour, before or after the evening service, spent in hymn practice by choir and congregation would result in better congregational singing. The people in the pews would have the opportunity of learning unfamiliar hymns and, most important of all, would realize that their singing is a necessary contribution to the service. In this way the danger of leaving the musical part of worship entirely to the choir could be met.

In addition, hymn festivals should be arranged by groups of churches. Some of the loveliest songs extant have been written for the church, but the general public in these days seldom hears them.

The immense value of song in worship has been recognized by the Salvation Army and by all the great revivalists. If it is true that many of the Moody and Sankey hymns are poor music and poorer verse, it is also true that some of them have a simplicity and sincerity that makes them ideal for congregational singing. They are often spoiled by unmusical playing and singing, but this does not destroy their worth.

Speaking in Church.

Speaking in Church belongs to the pulpit and not to the pew, and of all public platforms the pulpit presents the greatest difficulties. The speaker stands in a very special relationship to his audience, and within the limits of one service, speech must serve many purposes—from prayer to the announcing of hymns and notices. In addition, few churches have good acoustic properties,

and in many the pulpit is not visible from all the pews.

Congregations are expected to take an intelligent interest in the services, but their efforts to do so are frequently defeated because of the difficulty of hearing what is said, or because of the speaker's mannerisms. These mannerisms are not necessarily affectations, but may be devices adopted in the hope that they will help the voice to carry, help to arrest the attention of the congregation, help to make the speaker effective. They may, perhaps, be unconsciously used. Once adopted, however, they are difficult to dislodge, and, in any case, congregations are loath to criticize the speaker to his face, however they may discuss him in his absence.

Praying aloud.

The most difficult form of speaking is prayer—particularly extempore prayer. Possibly the chief criticism that can be made of its delivery is that it loses so easily its essential quality of supplication and sounds like a second sermon or else a conversation. With a set form of service and prayers appointed to be read, the danger lies in over-familiarity with the words, and a tendency to recite the prayers at a pace which reduces intelligent listening to the minimum. Where prayers are intoned the stresses frequently fall on words which are unimportant to the sense and, in consequence, real listening becomes difficult. It may be argued that as the words are familiar it does not really matter whether they are heard or not. The answer to that argument is that if the voice is used to communicate words, listening ears will be disappointed and unsatisfied if they cannot hear and understand what is being said. Speech is of necessity a creative activity, demanding a like response. It is better to rely on the silent reading of prayers than to use spoken words in such a way that they are

false to the principles which govern their use. It is fatally easy for ears to give up the effort to hear, and for the mind then to occupy itself with other thoughts.

Prayer, whatever its spoken form, must create the atmosphere which we all associate with it—a quiet concentration of the spirit to give and to receive.

Reading the Lessons.

Reading aloud is not so easy as it may seem to those who never try to do it. The printed page is between the speaker and the listener. The speaker has to re-create from written symbols the essential quality of the chosen passage. It is not enough to read the words—the situation which gave rise to the words must be realized and communicated.

The Bible contains every form of literature—poetry, drama, narrative, historical facts, and recorded speeches. Of these last, some were delivered to crowds, others to the few, gathered together in some quiet place, bound by the close ties of discipleship.

It is obvious that one style of reading will not prove suitable for passages so varied in their nature. Consequently the reader must be able to vary his approach, if he is to communicate to his listeners the real purport of what he reads.

The pulpit is not the stage and a dramatic performance is out of place, but a recognition of the difference between dramatic narrative and a series of historical facts is necessary, as is the ability to communicate this difference to the listeners.

The Bible is often called the "Word". It is full of recorded sayings. It is essentially oral in quality. Granted sensitivity in the reader, it speaks for itself, and speaks with power. Unimaginative reading, however, can and does obscure its vital meaning.

The Sermon.

Some of the greatest orators the world has known have been preachers, and it is as true to-day as ever it was that a great preacher is never without his congregation. But not all preachers are great orators, and, indeed, oratory, in the old sense of the word, is not essential to successful pulpit speaking. There has been, in recent years, a turning to naturalness in speech and a revolt against anything which savoured of artificiality or convention. The pendulum has swung far enough to show the dangers of too great a naturalistic tendency; nevertheless simplicity and directness are accounted cardinal virtues in the pulpit to-day.

One of the major difficulties which a congregation has to contend with is the sermon which is read from a manuscript. Brief notes are a different matter and indeed are usually essential. The objection to a written sermon is that it lacks the spontaneity and directness of the sermon which is created in the pulpit from brief notes and a well-thought-out argument. It sounds like the written word in phrasing and vocabulary and, in the moment of delivery, lacks the creative impulse of speech. A sermon that is a literary masterpiece in the study is often somewhat of a failure when read from the pulpit. Admittedly it is possible so to read a sermon that the fact that it has been written out beforehand is not very obvious, but even so something seems to be lacking. The speaker is tied to his script, and cannot easily diverge from it. He is not really free to respond to the unspoken but very real demands that may be made upon him by members of his congregation. In fact, he has created his sermon, in its entirety, before the situation has arisen in which he is to deliver it. Preparation there must be, but as far as possible words themselves should be left until the moment of communication comes.

Experience teaches the extent to which the audience is the partner of the speaker and what inspiration results from this partnership. While at first it may be difficult to rely on notes instead of a full manuscript, in time the value of spontaneity will be seen to outweigh the safeguard of a manuscript. The spoken and the written word serve fundamentally different situations. Wherever direct contact is possible the spoken word is the more effective communication. The written word links those who cannot meet and talk. In addition, the written word is a permanent record which can be read and re-read, and, in consequence, its vocabulary and style are suited to quiet study. Speech is heard once and cannot be repeated, and therefore must use words and phrases which can be quickly assimilated through the ear. No speaker expects his listeners to remember every word he has said. His intention is that they shall remember the essence of his words—shall receive a clear impression of his intention and shall be stimulated to constructive thinking and to action.

In this connexion it is interesting to realize that the great world-teachers have always taught their disciples by word of mouth. Though, nowadays, they may set down their teachings they do not rely on the written word. The speaker from the pulpit is a teacher, and speech is one of his most important tools. He speaks *with* his congregation, not *at* them—from the pulpit in their presence, not from his study and solitude. Thus, everything which tends to separate him in thought and feeling from them is to be avoided.

Announcing Hymns and Notices.

It is to be deplored that a custom has grown up of announcing only the first line of a hymn. If there is any purpose at all in saying the words of the hymn in addition to its number in the hymnal, then at least the first verse should be read and read well. Frequently

it is really necessary to read more than one verse. This announcing of the hymns is as much a part of the whole service as any other portion and should be given proper consideration.

There is much to be said for the printed form of service in which no announcement from the pulpit is necessary, but the cost of this is prohibitive to small churches. On the other hand, the reading of a portion of the hymn before it is sung can give it a significance which otherwise it may lack. To many people a hymn is really a tune and the words are scarcely realized. To hear the words spoken is to become aware of them and, as a result, to sing them with understanding. Now, a service is a whole, with every part important since each is an act of worship. Careless announcing of hymns is destructive to the service and should never be permitted. It introduces a discordant element, and is, in part, responsible for poor hymn-singing.

Where notices are given out during a service the same care should be taken to see that they are adequately spoken. If they are important enough to be included in the service, the way in which they are announced is also important.

Members of congregations could, if they would, criticize sharply some speakers whose business it is to tell them of activities during the week for which their support is asked.

Notices should be read clearly and at a reasonable pace, since presumably it is intended that the information conveyed is to be remembered. Also the speaker should give the impression that the notices are important, and not something which has to be said but to which no one need listen. Either these notices are important or they are not. If the latter, they should not be included week by week in the services. If the former, then, however familiar they may be, they should receive the same consideration and attention as any other part of the service.

A plea might be entered at this point for a sensitivity in the speed at which one part of the service succeeds another. It is no uncommon experience to find hymns following prayers so swiftly that there is no time to adjust one's thinking, and the closing hymn announced so abruptly after the address that the effect of the latter is somewhat spoiled. There is no need for such haste, and it is, to say the least of it, inartistic. Where speech and song are creatively used, such blunders cannot happen.

The Pulpit Voice.

Many churches are difficult to speak in because of bad acoustics. Any raising of the voice produces an echo, while quiet speaking does not carry to distant pews, particularly if these are set under a gallery. Pillars, as well as deflecting the voice, make it impossible to see the pulpit from certain seats. It is not to be wondered at that, in making efforts to overcome these difficulties, speakers adopt various artifices in the hope that these will make their words audible. Yet a congregation realizes that artifices succeed only in adding another difficulty to those already present, and one which is even harder to bear!

There are three major temptations which speakers from the pulpit will do well to avoid. One is to develop a throaty tone, another to rely on volume of tone rather than on energy to carry the voice, and the third is to use a rising inflexion at the end of every sentence.

Throaty Tone.

Voice production is dealt with in an earlier chapter, so that it is not necessary here to do more than say that this type of voice results from over-use of the pharyngeal resonator at the expense of those situated in the head. The quality of tone is somewhat solid

and inflexible and strikes the ear as being a little too cultivated. Speakers who use it tend to rely on it too much and to neglect firm articulation of consonants with the result that speech itself is indistinct.

Volume of Tone.

Its habitual use leads to reliance on volume of tone rather than on crisp, clear utterance, thus reducing the possibilities of variety in speech. Increase in volume of tone, or constant use of considerable volume, brings the speaker face to face with acoustic difficulties, apart from the danger of appearing monotonous. Monotony is never due to speaking on an actual monotone, but to lack of variety in tone quality and weight, in the range of pitch used and in the intonation pattern.

Variety in tone springs from the emotional response of the speaker to the situation which calls forth his speech. When volume of tone is regarded as a means of making the voice carry, and quality of tone is limited by inadequate vocal production, speech itself is in danger of sounding both dull and artificial.

Rising Inflexions.

The old adage "Raise your voice at the end of a sentence" has led to a great deal of misunderstanding. Undoubtedly many speakers fail to make their phrase-endings clear, but this is due, primarily, to a reduction of speech-energy—an unconscious and therefore uncontrolled reaction to the ending of an idea or a series of ideas. Deliberately to close every sentence on a rising inflexion is to destroy meaning, for this inflexion has a particular significance and should be used only in its proper context. It is not, in itself, more easily heard than a falling inflexion and there is no excuse for its continual use. Any arbitrary departure from the natural cadences of speech should be steadfastly

avoided. Whatever effect such departures may have in arresting the attention of the congregation, when first they occur, is entirely outweighed by their artificiality. Before long they interpose a barrier between the speaker and the listeners. To overcome acoustic difficulties, a clear flexible voice is necessary—one which can be used within a moderate range of pitch without any suggestion of monotony.

Vitality, simplicity and freedom from all artifice in delivery will command the attention of any congregation. Every service calls for creative activity from all who engage in it. Every service is an act of worship expressed through speech and song. If the level of creative activity falls in any part of the service there is very real danger that it will gradually fall in every part and the service itself become something in the nature of a formal proceeding, with the pulpit and the choir endeavouring to carry the entire responsibility.

The nature of speech and song is such that if they are used mechanically and without creative effort they become a stumbling block and a rather hideous travesty of what each one of us instinctively knows they ought to be.

In a world inclined to dismiss organized religion as an outworn convention, those who support the churches cannot afford to neglect the vital use of speech and song, for, as the Book of Proverbs says, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue".

CHAPTER VI

Festivals

"Rejoice greatly."

COMPETITION in music is no new development, but one which has its roots set deeply in tradition. According to legend, Phœbus and Pan battled for musical honours. History records the Pythian games of the sixth century B.C. The Song Contest of the Minne-singers in Germany in the thirteenth century A.D. is familiar to us through Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*.

The Eisteddfod in Wales has its origin in meetings of Welsh bards which can be traced back, in one form or another, to the seventh century.

In the Middle Ages, the "Puys" held literary and musical competitions and crowned the winner "king". Puy Notre Dame, near Saumur, had founded a "troubadour" academy as early as the twelfth century, and in the thirteenth century London had a musical society called "Le Pui" which held competitions.

It is known that Handel and Domenico Scarlatti competed together in 1708, and so did Mozart and Clementi in 1781 in Vienna under the auspices of the Emperor Joseph II. Later there were similar meetings between Beethoven and Woelfl.

When railways began to make travelling easier, singing and band competitions became very popular on the Continent. In 1851, Schumann was one of the adjudicators at the Belgian Men's Singing Society in

Brussels, and, in 1852, he was adjudicating at a competition for Men's Choirs in Düsseldorf.¹

In the *Oxford History of Music* Percy Scholes quotes two announcements of competitions, sent out by publicans in the eighteenth century, as exemplifying the English love of choral song and sport.

To all lovers of Music—At Mr. William Kirkham's at the sign of the Horse and the Jockey in Warley Common near Brentwood, Essex, on Thursday, Whitsun Week, 1773, will be given gratis a Punch Bowl, &c., to be sung for by any company of Singers in this County. Each Company to sing three songs in two parts, and three catches in three parts, the catches to be sung out of Mr. Arnold's Catch Club Harmony. Singing to begin at two and to be decided by three proper judges of music, after which there will be a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music.

Singing on Monday, November 10th, at Coward Tucker's the Bell Inn, Corsham, by three or more companies of Singers; each Company to sing two three-voice songs, two two-voice songs, and two catches; the best singers to have two guineas, the second-best to have one guinea, and the third half-a-guinea. Proper umpires to be chosen by the companies, the music to be delivered to the umpires before singing. To dine precisely at one o'clock. Ordinary 1s. 6d. No company to sing unless they dine.

Before the Great War, an Imperial Choral Contest was held in Germany every four or five years, the highest award being the Kaiser's gold chain. It is recorded that, in 1903, the Kaiser and Kaiserin sat through four days of singing at this contest.

The first English competitions on modern lines were probably those held in one or two places where there were colonies of Welsh people, who organized replicas of their own Eisteddfods. In 1882, John Spencer Curwen, an adjudicator at the Welsh National Eisteddfod, was inspired by his experience there to found, at Stratford, London, a competition on modern lines, with classes for solo and combined vocal performance and instrumental performance.

¹ *Musical Letters from Abroad*, Lowell Mason.

In 1885 Miss A. M. Wakefield, a notable singer of professional status, introduced competitions for vocal quartets at a village flower show in Kendal, Westmorland.

The idea spread, until, in 1905, the Association of Competition Festivals was founded, largely on the initiative of Miss Wakefield and those associated with her. This Association was succeeded in 1921 by the present British Federation of Musical Festivals, which now has associated with it over 200 festivals held in all parts of the British Empire.

The importance of this festival movement to all who are interested in speech and song can scarcely be exaggerated. It provides not only the opportunity of a platform, but an incentive to study, and it sets a good standard for achievement. The resulting improvement in choral technique has made it possible for composers to write choral music that could scarcely have been performed before the beginning of this century—a good illustration of the service rendered to music and musicians by the festival movement.

Since most festivals have classes for children as well as for adults the stimulus to the study of vocal and instrumental music needs no emphasis. Many festivals now have an Elocution Section, which includes dramatic work as well as verse-speaking and, occasionally, classes for impromptu and prepared speaking, reading at sight and the retelling of a story. Thus, in the festival movement, there is a very real opportunity for the encouragement of speaking and singing, and for the development of discriminating listening on the part of audiences.

Together with the opportunities, however, come certain dangers, of which the leaders of the movement are no doubt well aware. The greatest of these lies in the competitive element. Competition up to a point is healthy, but beyond that point becomes destructive to the real purpose of a festival. The multiplicity of cups and medals has made it possible for what is

colloquially called "pot-hunting" to appear, and this means that competitors enter more in the hope of winning a prize than in gaining valuable experience and contributing to a festival of speech and song. Organizers of festivals are in a difficult position, for expenses are extremely high, and in order to meet costs it is necessary to have large entries and a big audience. Whatever may be the conditions in other countries, it seems that in England at present it is necessary to offer many prizes to arouse sufficient interest. This seems to lead to the supposition that English audiences, as a whole, enjoy the contest itself more than the subject of the contest, and until there is a reawakening of the natural human delight in speech and song, and a lessening of the emphasis at present laid on performance, the competitive element in festivals is likely to prove a hindrance to their æsthetic development. That this is realized by supporters of the festival movement is shown by the growth, since 1920, of the non-competitive festivals which owe their existence to the work of Ulrich Brunner of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, and which are steadily growing in numbers.

It must be recognized, too, that success in festivals, as in examination results, is good advertisement for teachers of music and elocution. Particularly is this the case in districts where competition is keen between local teachers and where it is difficult for all to earn an adequate living. It is a sad commentary on twentieth-century civilization that artists have to struggle for a living and that their work is judged largely by the number of prizes and certificates their pupils can collect. Any good teacher knows the difficulty of giving a thorough training in any art if time is always being spent in preparation for set examinations or for festivals. It is a strain on teacher and pupil alike. The responsibility for this state of affairs is widespread and cannot be confined to any one group of people. Efforts

are being made constantly to develop a vital interest in music, as witness the excellent work done by the Rural Music Schools since 1929. These schools, which originated in Hertfordshire, aim at the encouragement of musical culture in the villages, and their activities include lectures, violin classes, and the formation of orchestras and choral societies.

Dr. Walford Davies has said: "Our object is not to gain a prize nor defeat a rival, but to pace one another on the road to excellence." If all who take part in festivals, from organizers to audience, could put these wise words into practice, the festival movement would flourish as it deserves to do.

Adjudicators.

A very great responsibility falls on the shoulders of an adjudicator. His task is not only to select the best among the competitors but to encourage and help the less good. He must be able to retain his sense of judgment while listening to a great number of competitors, each performing the same piece. He must be able to justify his criticisms by reference to the work itself and not only to his personal opinion. He needs a sense of humour, an unfailing interest in the competitors and their efforts, and the ability to be constructive in his criticisms. In addition, he must be able to work fast and keep as far as possible to the time allotted for each class. He must be prepared for criticism from the audience, for no adjudicator can hope to satisfy everyone, and, in any case, pleasing the audience is incidental. It is more important that he shall win their respect even when they disagree with him. Lastly, he must be a sufficiently good speaker to make himself heard!

It is inevitable that adjudicators differ to some degree in their judgments. No one is infallible, and uniformity in detail in adjudications would have all the evils associated with standardization. Nevertheless,

there is room for greater collaboration between adjudicators and for more general agreement on basic principles. A meeting between festival organizers and adjudicators, with free discussion of difficulties and complaints and also of successes, might prove the forerunner of a valuable development in the festival movement.

With the gradual raising of festival standards and the opening up of new activities, particularly on the speech side, comes the necessity of specialized adjudication. The time has gone by when a singing professor was automatically considered perfectly competent to judge verse-speaking, or a pianist competent to judge singing.

Festival Organization.

Festival organizers can do much to make the adjudicator's task as easy as possible, by allowing adequate time for each class. The period allotted should allow time for the adjudicator to think and write his criticisms on the mark sheets and to give his adjudication at the end of the class. A short break, even of ten minutes in the middle of a long and arduous morning or afternoon, should be regarded as an essential part of the programme. Adjudicators are human beings, not calculating machines!

The Syllabus.

The syllabus should be very carefully selected. It is usual to ask the adjudicator to set the tests, but, even so, the selection committee should discuss the chosen pieces in the light of their knowledge of local conditions. If alterations are necessary the adjudicator can be informed. Broadly speaking, the choice should be governed by the desire to keep to a high artistic standard while recognizing the age and capacity of the competitors. In particular, where the younger children

are concerned, care should be taken to set work which they can appreciate and enjoy.

Ensemble classes in music and classes for group-speaking in poetry afford an opportunity for all those who would never enter a class for solo work, and deserve every possible support for they act as a corrective to the large number of solo classes.

Solo verse speaking should be balanced as far as possible by classes for extempore and prepared speaking, for sight-reading, for retelling stories. To speak poetry is not the only purpose to which speech can be put, and many people who would never attempt verse will try impromptu speaking.

There is room, too, for impromptu dramatic work. Given a key phrase, such as "Here comes the fire engine", and ten minutes' preparation, a team can create a scene out of their combined imaginations. The value of this work lies in the stress it lays on vivid creative activity, ingenuity, and swift response to a suggested situation. Where over-training for performance is a danger, free, spontaneous work is an asset. From the point of view of the committee, the popularity of such classes with the audience is an added recommendation.

Competitors and the Audience.

It would be interesting to discover the reasons for which competitors enter year by year not only for their local festivals but for those held in other districts. It is important, too, that those for whose benefit festivals are held should have a clear idea of what can be gained from them.

Perhaps the greatest gain lies in the opportunity to learn from other competitors and from the adjudicator, thereby developing an understanding of what is meant by the term "artistry". It is possible to miss this opportunity by placing too great stress on the idea of

winning or losing. It is not given to everyone to be a fine executant in his chosen medium, but moderate performance can go hand in hand with deep and true appreciation of the work of composers and writers. Listening is, in itself, an art, and one which is well worth cultivating. The inestimable value of the festival movement is that it offers a unique opportunity for training, both in performance and in discriminating listening. It is a contest, but there are prizes to be won other than those announced on the programme, and every competitor has an equal chance of winning them. Among them are a growing delight in music and speech, a development of critical appreciation, and a sense of comradeship with all who join in this communal effort.

Competitors who owe so much to the festival movement can give a great deal to it in return if they concentrate on the larger issues and thus render void the criticism, frequently heard, that they care only about winning, or, at least, of beating a rival.

The Audience.

Audiences can help competitors considerably by their attitude. It is difficult to avoid partisanship. In their eyes their geese are usually swans, and it is not easy to remain unbiassed in judgment. What is needed is a change in the general attitude towards audiences. It seems as though they have at present only box-office value. They are important because they pay to come and listen. Now, an audience is essential to performance, and the more seriously an audience accepts its responsibilities the higher the standard of performance. Festival audiences should be competitors, but as listeners, not as performers. They should be alive to the opportunity offered to them of learning how to listen and what to listen for, and should feel an equal respon-

sibility with other members of the festival organization for the standards achieved.

A festival is the culminating point of months of work. The period of preparation for it is as important as the festival itself. The activities connected with it, the meeting together for practices, enrich the daily lives of those concerned, and have an influence which cannot be measured in terms of the success of the actual festival. Festival organizers in any village or town have a claim on the interest and support of all who live in the district, for they provide a stimulus to the study of music and literature and a counter-attraction to the mechanized amusement so prevalent to-day. In country districts, where theatres and cinemas are few, the festival is the great event of the year. Those people who are inclined to doubt the value of this movement and to criticize it from the æsthetic point of view should visit a festival in such a district. They would find more often than not an enthusiasm, a vitality, and a standard of performance which would cause them to modify their views considerably.

A festival comes into being when a body of people gather themselves together to sing, play and speak in each other's presence. It is a corporate activity, depending for its success on the support and enthusiasm of performers, audience, and organizers alike. The audience is by no means the least important of these three, and it should claim the privilege of supporting the festival throughout the year, and not merely on one or two of the actual days of the contest.

CHAPTER VII

Speaking and Singing on the Stage

"... let your discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature."—HAMLET.

Speech and the Stage.

THE most popular of all platforms is the stage, as witness the number of amateur dramatic societies which flourish up and down the country. Yet, although it is a platform, and speech is exceedingly important, it seems frequently that voice and speech receive too little attention from the actor during his training. There is so much attention paid to the eye on the modern stage that the ear is likely to suffer unless dramatists and producers and audiences protest. Modern developments in stage lighting and décor offer no doubt a temptation, almost irresistible, to the play-producer. A dazzling spectacle is appreciated by the average audience and many a play has been carried to success by its appeal to the eye. Nevertheless a play is something to be heard and speech is important.

A Stage Dialect.

Fashions in speech change as considerably if not as quickly as fashions in clothes. It used to be necessary to declaim from the stage—unkind critics called it

ranting! To-day the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction and the tendency is towards very natural speech.

Now the ordinary speech of the younger generation to-day has several marked characteristics, none of which are helpful to listeners. There is very little lip-movement in articulation: vowels are losing their sharply defined shapes, and becoming distinctly neutral in quality; diphthongs are losing their second element and are being replaced by a lengthened pure vowel; consonants are distinctly weak, owing partly to lack of lip movement. Intonation as a result of this somewhat formless articulation is restricted in range and lacks flexibility. However popular such a type of speech may become for conversational purposes, it cannot be, for a considerable time, a useful type of speech for the stage. Stage speech, as broadcast speech, is listened to by an audience used to very varied types of spoken English. To satisfy all ears an unobtrusive style of speech is needed, that is, a speech free from any regional dialect or from any association with a special class or group of people.

Drama is universal in character and needs a universal type of speech—in fact, it needs, as does all public speech, its own dialect. Such a dialect must owe its existence to the peculiar needs of the stage. Actors need to learn this stage-dialect if their own colloquial speech differs from it.

It is easier to suggest what such a dialect might be than it is to have the suggestion accepted, for the general public is still in the stage of becoming speech-conscious and prejudices about speech have not yet given way to judgments founded on phonetic knowledge. It seems as though this stage-dialect should arise from two major considerations, namely, the aural needs of an audience and the nature of the play. Obviously dialect plays must use dialect speech. In plays written round characters with distinctive types of speech the various

speech habits must be clearly heard. For such plays clarity of diction and flexible, varied vocal quality are fundamental necessities. There still remain, however, many plays which are based on situations so universal in their appeal that they transcend the boundaries of class and locality. For these is needed a form of speech which, while retaining the essential quality of naturalness, yet is æsthetically satisfying and free from momentary fashions.

A good many years ago Dr. Aiken demonstrated the possibilities of the vowel scale—a sequence of inherent pitch in vowels comparable to the musical octave. In standard English, phoneticians have observed that, while the vowel sounds do not correspond exactly with the octave, yet there is a certain similarity. For example there is roughly the difference of an octave between the inherent pitch of the vowel *ee* and that of the vowel *oo*.¹ The inherent pitch of *ah* is about a fourth below that of *ee*. When speech is used for æsthetic purposes, it can be argued that it should make use of its inherent musical qualities rather than the habits belonging to its daily use. Vowels would then be distinct one from another and free from any suggestion of class or local speech. Consonants would be valued for the sense of texture which they give. Intonation would become more fluent. In fact, speech itself would be regarded as a medium for the artist's use—a medium of first importance.

Such speech because of its clarity and its fitness for the purpose it serves would be pleasing to an audience. It would be unobtrusive because of its freedom from personal or local peculiarities, and yet it would be natural since it makes use only of those characteristics inherent in speech. Many notable actors and actresses use this stage dialect, but there are more who have not yet achieved it.

¹ If these two vowels are breathed, the difference in pitch can be clearly heard.

The influence of such a dialect would be far-reaching, for it would be a fairly constant factor among the transient fashions of a living spoken language. It would of necessity adjust itself to any vital change in the spoken language, but, always, it would represent a high æsthetic standard in speech.

Verse Drama.

The modern trend towards verse drama indicates the need for some such development in stage speech. The language of poetry differs from that of conversation. It exists at a higher level, has greater intensity, and concerns itself with matters of universal significance. It asks for speech with similar characteristics—speech different in degree, but not in kind from that normally used.

The return of the Chorus to the stage provides a further stimulus to speech. Choral speaking has seen a considerable revival in this country since the beginning of the century. Recent verse dramas by T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, and Cecil Day-Lewis have perhaps obscured the fact that Gordon Bottomley had written several verse-dramas, based on Celtic legends, before his *Acts of St. Peter* was written for performance in Exeter Cathedral. These plays are better known in the north of England than in the south, but there is no doubt he was amongst the first of living poets to revive this ancient use of speech. Speech-choirs, to borrow an American term, are springing up all over the country. For the most part they confine themselves to recitals of poetry and prose, and are somewhat hampered by the fact that so little has been written in fairly recent times for many voices. It is necessary to search for material which is sufficiently universal in its appeal to be enhanced by choric treatment. Quite apart from any æsthetic consideration, these speech choirs are doing very valuable

work in stimulating an interest in speech among both their members and the general public. Out of this interest will grow gradually a greater appreciation of verse-drama and, in consequence, a greater opportunity for modern writers. In fact, it may result in bringing back to the stage that sense of importance of the ear which it has been in danger of losing.

Amateur Players.

Amateur players, in process of gaining stage experience, might remember that there are one or two difficulties concerning stage speech which merit early consideration. One is the necessity of avoiding monotony of pitch between the players. It is extremely easy to begin to speak one's lines at the pitch used by the previous speaker. It is sometimes possible to avoid this danger by careful casting, but even so, care should be taken to avoid this habit. Speakers should take every opportunity of listening in order to quicken their aural perception of pitch.

Then pace should receive attention. Sometimes in an effort to avoid a suggestion of dragging, the players speak so quickly that the audience cannot follow them. It is necessary that cues be taken up swiftly, but to hurry through the actual words is a mistake. There will be moments in the play when swift speech is essential to the building up of a climax. To begin too swiftly rules out the possibility of any increase in pace, and, in the long run, is as fatal as speech which is too slow. Natural pace for the stage is not the same thing as natural pace in conversation. The words have to carry further and the audience cannot ask for them to be repeated. The suggestion of continuity comes more from alertness in taking cues and from an easy, flexible use of the voice than from speech rapid in itself. In addition, temperament influences the natural pace of speech. We do not all speak at the same rate normally,

and allowance for this must be made on the stage. There is, in fact, the general pace of the play itself, and the particular pace of the characters. When these are successfully resolved there is variety of individual pace within the larger, general movement of the play.

Sense of Form.

A further difficulty is that of communicating a sense of form, particularly in long speeches. In print the eye is helped by the use of paragraphs which suggest pause and a further development of the thought. In speech this suggestion is carried by the use of pause and some change of pitch. Amateur speakers tend to be afraid of pauses—they always seem so much longer than they really are—and in consequence, there is a hurrying from point to point with too little variety. This is a fault which experience cures, but it can be tackled from the beginning if the danger is realized. It will be avoided entirely if the speaker can concentrate on a true re-creation of the words and keep an inner sense of poise in the unusual situation of the stage.

Singing on the Stage.

It is of first importance that young singers should not rush into stage performance, but have patience to wait until they are assured of sufficient command over their vocal apparatus. True interpretation demands a vocal technique so sure that it has become practically subconscious. The physical organs must respond instantaneously and accurately to the mental images—just as they would if the artist actually experienced the emotions he seeks to interpret. Since there is a physical reaction to every passing thought resulting in some modification of physical condition, it is essential that the vocal organs develop sufficient sensitivity to react as truly to the singer's imagination as to his personal experiences. This does not present much difficulty

when interpretation is concerned with emotions natural to the singer and with which he sympathizes, but when these are unfamiliar or repugnant to him there is a less alert response of mind and body and a greater difficulty in achieving a synthesis between the emotion felt and its expression. To attempt stage singing too soon frequently results in the use of inappropriate tone colour and lack of variety in vowel colour, and in the length and degree of energy given to consonants. The student should be completely master of his craft before he essays operatic roles. Then, with technique responsive to any emotional stimulus, he will find that he can sympathize temporarily with a Nero or a Jezebel and still call his soul his own.

The Vocal demands of Opera.

The vocal demands of such composers as Meyerbeer, Wagner and Verdi differ considerably from those made both by innumerable forgotten composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and by Bach, Handel and Mozart. The vocal style of the later men derives largely from that of the earlier, but on the whole it lays greater emphasis on the expression of feeling. Formerly, beauty of tone and other instrumental qualities were the first requirement, but now dramatic effect and strongly marked expression are demanded.

Vocal power has become important in these days of heavy orchestral accompaniment, and even in Italy itself it appears that the loud singer is the good singer, if gramophone records of world-famous vocalists are any criterion.

The rise of the German Lieder school has resulted in a demand for a high standard of fidelity to the detailed thought and emotion of the poet. The dramatic element is strong in some songs of this type.¹

¹ "Der Erlkönig", Schubert; "Waldeggespräch", Schumann; "Vergebliches", Brahms; "La Belle dame sans merci", Stanford.

Melodrama.

In addition to the forms of opera previously mentioned,¹ there is melodrama. This is a play, or a passage from a play, or a poem, in which the speaking voice is used against a musical background. There are examples to be found in Rousseau's *Pygmalion* ², and in the works of Benda.³ Beethoven used it in a movement of his music to Goethe's *Egmont*, and in the grave-digging scene in his opera *Fidelio*. Weber used it in *Der Freischütz*, and Schumann in parts of *Manfred*. Modern examples can be found in Strauss's *Enoch Arden*, and in Honegger's *King David*.

Pantomime.

The word pantomime derives from the Greek and means "all-imitating". The Greeks, and after them the Romans, had a kind of entertainment in which an actor performed in dumb show, while a chorus described the meaning of his actions and commented on the story.

In Roman pantomimes the chorus was at one time a singer declaiming to the accompaniment of a flute. The actor was masked, and thus depended for expression on bodily movement, particularly of the hands. The mask was changed according to the character of the play being represented. Usually the subject of such plays were mythological and familiar to the audience. The word pantomime then signified the actor and not the play. The true pantomime has been subjected to a good deal of musical development. Well-known examples are *L'Enfant Prodigue* (Wormser), produced in Paris, 1890, and the *Legend of Joseph* (Strauss), produced in 1914.

¹ Page 95.

² Performed in 1770.

³ *Ariadne*, 1775; *Medea*, 1777.

Pantomime in England.

At one time English pantomime enjoyed the musical services of the best native composers, amongst them Arne, Dibdin and Shield. Then it had more coherence than it has to-day. Until well into the nineteenth century it made good use of certain characters borrowed from the Italian *Commedia dell Arte*—particularly Harlequin, Colombine and Pantaloon—but gradually its musical significance grew less.

To-day, pantomime signifies a Christmas entertainment, based on a fairy tale such as *Cinderella* or *Mother Goose*, but owing little to the actual story it is supposed to represent. It has become an extravagant variety entertainment with music consisting largely of humorous and sentimental songs.

CHAPTER VIII

Broadcast Speech and Song

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."
—MATTHEW, xii. 34.

Speech and the Microphone.

THERE can be little doubt that broadcasting has stimulated the growing interest in speech, and that it will continue to provide opportunity for discussion amongst those who hold strong views on what broadcast speech should be. The British Broadcasting Corporation is fortunate in that it will be a long time before all listeners agree in detail on the question of what is the ideal in broadcast speech. Controversy is good, provided that those who indulge in it are open-minded enough to realize that prejudices are common to everyone and that all are worthy of the same amount of consideration—or of none at all. At least there is little likelihood of the responsible officials at Broadcasting House settling down into a rut. Theirs is an extremely difficult task. They have to reconcile the characteristics of the human instrument of voice with the limitations of mechanical transmission. They have to contend with the likes and dislikes of millions of listeners who differ from each other both in their capacity to listen and in their tastes and preferences. They have to recruit a body of invisible speakers from amongst those who hitherto have spoken from a platform in full view of an audience able to look as well as listen. They have to use these speakers in situations which vary from open-air commentaries to the privacy of a

studio. Critics of their spoken programmes seem, sometimes, to forget the magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome and of the considerable measure of success which they have achieved.

Hitherto, public speaking has demanded from a speaker a technique suited to platform delivery. It has been necessary for him so to speak that those members of the audience seated farthest from the platform heard him as easily as those in the front rows. The audience has watched the speaker and has expected to be satisfied visually as well as aurally. It has listened in a public hall of some kind, with the speaker physically isolated from it upon the platform, and, in consequence, public speaking has become in some sense a performance. It has been possible for a speaker to impress his audience by clever showmanship, as well as by the significance of his spoken word. The microphone changes every one of these conditions. The microphone audience sits at home. It cannot see the speaker, but can only listen. Physically, speaker and audience are more isolated from each other than ever they were, yet the relationship between them has become infinitely more intimate. Instead of addressing a crowd, the speaker talks to individuals. His voice is carried not by his own effort but by mechanical means. In consequence, much of what has hitherto served his purpose for platform delivery is now not only unnecessary but dangerous. He has to adjust his manner of speech to an entirely different situation.

The microphone is exceedingly sensitive. It picks up and intensifies those slight mannerisms in speech which the human ear probably misses. It records tendencies to exaggeration or monotony with unflattering exactness. It also records faithfully the delicate subtleties and nuances of which the human voice is capable. Mechanical invention though it is, it has the capacity to transmit personality in speech more clearly than any other means yet devised by man.

Listeners who are interested in broadcast talks realize clearly how important is a speaker's personality. The B.B.C.'s policy of selecting experts ensures that the content of the talks is excellent, but it cannot ensure with the same degree of certainty that the delivery of the talk will be successful. It is not a matter of intelligibility only—few speakers are difficult to hear—it is far more a matter of attitude on the part of the speaker to his audience. It is possible to talk *at*, to talk *to* and to talk *with* an audience. To talk *at* an audience fails from a platform and through the microphone. To talk *to* an audience succeeds frequently from the platform but fails through the microphone. To talk *with* an audience succeeds always. Now the ability to talk with people depends upon the speaker's general outlook—upon his sympathy with and understanding of his fellows; upon his vitality and keenness; upon the extent to which he has successfully adjusted himself to life. The human voice is a human barometer, reflecting the temperamental condition of the individual. When there is nothing but voice to listen to—when looking cannot detract from concentration on hearing—the power the voice possesses of conveying personality has free play. Successful broadcasters of talks owe their success more to what they are than to what they say. Whenever and wherever speech is used this fact is true: that personality is the supreme factor making for success or failure; but it is the microphone which has brought this fact home to the listeners.

Standard or Regional Speech.

Pronunciation is a controversial matter and broadcast speech cannot hope to escape criticism. It seems as though a solution of the problem is not possible until pronunciation has ceased to be associated with class distinctions. Since speech is in part a product of envi-

ronment any uniformity is a vain hope until far-reaching changes have been brought about in the living conditions of a very large proportion of the nation. In addition, there are all the dialects heard in various parts of the country, where not only pronunciation but idiom differs from what at present is regarded as standard speech.

It seems as though the gradually awakening interest in speech has centred on this one of many factors in the spoken word, with the result that pronunciation is becoming something of a fetish. Standard speech has a social value without a doubt, but there is a personal value in speech too, and at present it seems as though these two values should be equally recognized and given their due place in broadcasting. Matters of general interest, of national or international importance, require to be broadcast in that common dialect we call standard English—simply because this type of speech is easily intelligible to all speakers of the English language. There still remains a great deal of broadcast material which has particular interest for certain regions and for which a regional type of spoken English is suitable.

The uniform adoption of a standard in speech can come only by consent on the part of all speakers. Any attempt at present to enforce the habits of southern speech on northern or western speakers can only strengthen the prejudice of speakers in these regions for their own form of spoken English. In any case, pronunciation is only one of many important factors in speech, and to concentrate attention on it to the exclusion of vocal quality and vitality of utterance is to do the spoken word great disservice.

Many speakers whose pronunciation is accepted as standard and who probably consider that their speech requires no further attention would be surprised to find how many listeners prefer a more robust, vital speaker to themselves, even though his pronunciation

has a regional flavour. And let it not be forgotten that there are many "cultural" dialects which are open to exactly the same criticism as regional ones, from the listener's point of view! What is needed is a respect for all forms of speech because of their personal and individual importance. Out of this respect for speech it should not be impossible to stimulate and develop a desire for a type of speech in which the social value predominates over the personal.

Some Hints for Speakers who wish to use the Microphone.

Fluency in speech is essential. This implies a natural ease in the use of speech as a medium of expression. Hesitant speakers are more difficult to listen to over the air than from a platform. It is necessary to set down what is to be said in such a form that, when read from the script, it sounds like the spoken and not the written language. A corollary to this is the ability to read aloud satisfactorily. Scripts are necessary because of the exact timing of programmes, but the fact that they are being used should not be too obvious.

Practice in speaking into the microphone is valuable and there are various institutions which supply this need. At first the lack of a visible audience has a paralysing effect. It is unusual to talk with no listener present and the apparent lack of any response is difficult to contend with. Experience, however, shows that it is possible to establish contact with the listener even through the microphone.

It is necessary to learn to control any movements of the head and body while speaking, for these alter the speaker's position in relation to the microphone, and cause a variation in the volume of tone transmitted. Tone control on the part of the speaker is equally essential, because sudden increases in volume are intensified by the microphone and sound exaggerated.

The voice itself should be well-balanced. The tendency to cultivate voice at the expense of articulation, frequently noticeable in platform speakers, must be avoided. Loudness often means inflexibility and a lack of warmth and depth of tone. Such a voice cannot adjust itself to the intimate, personal nature of broadcast speech.

There is no limelight for the speaker in the studio—no sea of upturned faces. There are no footlights, no darkening of the auditorium, no scenery for the listener, nor even a glimpse of the speaker. There is only a voice, and spoken words. The microphone offers the speaker the hardest possible test, but it offers him, too, a scope far greater than he has hitherto possessed.

Song and the Microphone.

Broadcasting gives to singers a two-fold opportunity. Not only does it offer them a chance to sing, but it provides programmes for them to listen to. These programmes may be talks, recitals, or performances of opera, but whatever their nature, they are extremely valuable to the student because of their range, and the quality of the artists.

The resources of the B.B.C. make it possible to give performances of works which otherwise would remain unheard. Contemporary composers are given their place in the programmes, and so gain recognition from the general public more rapidly than has hitherto been possible.

Not only classical music is heard in the programmes, but room is made for songs of every description. There are Lieder recitals, ballad recitals, folk song recitals. Light opera and musical comedies are frequently broadcast. Church music is not forgotten, as a recent and memorable series of lecture-recitals "Melodies of Christendom" goes to show. Then there are the variety shows of all kinds and, last but not least, the pro-

grammes of songs which were popular a generation or so ago.

Singers and Listeners.

Listeners know that there is both good and bad singing heard over the air. Certain voices do not broadcast well. They lack warmth and purity of tone and therefore sound harsh and unmusical. This may in part be due to technical difficulties in transmission, but it suggests faulty production and lack of sensitivity in the singer.

Diction is important. Few singers are really distinct over the air and this lack of clarity is all the more noticeable when the singer is invisible. In fact, much that is true of broadcast speech is equally true of song. Real artistry is essential and freedom from any suggestion of showmanship. Such artistry implies a perfect control over the technical detail of vocal production and diction.¹ No listener is so unreasonable as to demand perfection from every singer. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon singers to consider carefully the difference between singing in a concert hall and singing in a studio, and to be prepared to adjust themselves to these differences.

The microphone offers an opportunity—but an opportunity that is a challenge. In that lies its ultimate value to all who use it. It can be a real incentive to more serious study and to greater achievement or it can be regarded as a goal which, once achieved, marks the end of endeavour.

Crooners and Jazz Singers.

Crooning is an excessively sentimental type of singing, which was first introduced by male radio entertainers

¹ In his book *Interpretation in Song*, Mr. Plunket Greene stresses the necessity for such thorough study of interpretation that the song is, as it were, absorbed by the singer before he attempts to communicate it.

in the United States of America about 1929 or 1930. Before long crooners were heard in other countries and considerable objections were raised to their efforts by musically minded listeners. It is of interest to note that Italy banned crooners from broadcast programmes in 1935. It is such an extreme form of sentimental singing that it is probable that the vogue for it will pass. In the meantime one is constrained to wonder whether it is an indication of an underlying hunger for simple melody in a generation brought up on syncopation and the extraordinary, percussive noises of the jazz band.

Jazz singing has arisen from the custom of incorporating vocal melodies in dance music. As they played these melodies, the players burst into song, heartily, if not tunelessly. For dancers to sing as they danced is an ancient practice, but that players should sing is decidedly novel. From the point of view of song the custom has little to recommend it, since the singing is not particularly good and the songs themselves are frequently rather poor in quality, particularly as regards the words. To sing with a dance band seems to be a popular ambition with younger soloists to-day. It is to be hoped that they will not confine themselves to singing only such songs as occur in dance music, but will adventure further into the kingdom of song.

The Influence of Broadcasting.

It is fitting that a survey of opportunities for speakers and singers to-day should close with broadcasting, which includes in its programmes every usage of speech and song, and presents them entirely for the ear. It is too early yet to assess its influence in reviving a love of these natural gifts and a desire to use them. It may be that a future generation will acclaim it more for its share in developing the art of listening than its stimulus to performance—for its educative rather than its entertainment value. That the people behind the

programmes are aware both of their opportunities and their responsibilities is obvious, and nowhere more so than in the care given to the preparation of school broadcasts.

Singing is an important activity in every school, even if there is little general musical training. The broadcast lessons cover a wide field, suggesting ways of increasing aural appreciation, of stimulating the making of music as an essential to understanding it. They bring to the notice of the children folk music not only of their own but of other lands and encourage them to study songs which otherwise they might not have known. It remains to be seen what use is made of the opportunity given.

The broadcast word whether spoken or sung has come to stay. It concerns intimately those who speak and those who listen. The attitude of the listener is of immense importance, for it is easy for him to shelve his responsibilities—to hear without listening—be passive rather than active. Since listening is the partner of speech, a revival in the use of the spoken and sung word depends on the listener as much as on the speaker. He has to-day the opportunity to develop taste and discrimination, and to encourage speakers and singers to give their best. If this vital partnership can be achieved, future generations will be able to challenge the growing power of mechanical invention and hold the balance true between human creative activity and the products of the machine.

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